

UNIVERSITY OF ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE



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To Rev. J. Sheridan
with best wishes
from.

W. J. Kelly.

TRANSFERRED



PULPIT THEMES

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ADJUMENTA ORATORIS SACRI

SECOND EDITION

BY

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TRANSLATED BY

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PREFACE.

WHY, it may be asked, another volume of sermons, or sermon-matter, in view of the already large homiletic output ? Simply this : of the works on the subject with which I am acquainted—and I have had occasion by way of review to examine many—I have always been of opinion that the best is the *Adjumenta Oratoris Sacri* by Father Schouppe, S.J.

Collections of sermons can in the main be reduced to two classes ; namely, those that give barren outlines, and those that go to the opposite extreme in offering fully rounded discourses. The former are practically worthless, as they do not contain enough, and what they do contain is rarely sufficiently suggestive ; while the latter, in being too subjective, leave no room for individuality, without which no preacher can be successful. What then is needed ? Such a collection as will be highly suggestive, as will contain thoughts that are universal in their appeal, and, at the same time, will develop those thoughts with sufficient fulness to be helpful, without, however, going so far as to preclude that necessary something which must be infused or added by the one who uses them. This, I think, is what renders the *Adjumenta Oratoris Sacri* unique. Father Schouppe is with every man who wishes to help himself. For that purpose he leaves openings which indicate where the pregnant and suggestive idea can be further developed from one's own experience or otherwise. A profound theologian and distinguished Scriptural scholar, he had withal a rare gift of imagination, which enabled him to turn his learning to account in applying it to everyday life. The fact that the volume under discussion has gone through fourteen editions on the continent, and has been translated into French (a language already much enriched with works of its own), is, it would seem, high testimony to its excellence. Still it is, I fear, but little known to English speaking priests. It

occurred to me that the Latin garb had much to do with this, and on that account I decided to present it in English.

Here let me state that I have taken great liberty with the original. Not only have I translated freely, but I have frequently added thoughts of my own, only such, however, as naturally arise out of the text: indeed of certain parts it can merely be said that they are mostly a translation. Why this liberty? What, it may be objected, is the necessity if the book is a really great one? Because—paradoxical though it may sound—a literal translation may be a very inadequate presentation of the original. That I had already known in theory, and I found it to be so in fact. The genius of a language is a consideration, or equation, that must not be lost sight of—to do so might result in something like a body without a soul. Hence my aim was not so much a translation as a “transvaluation.” In this I hope I have succeeded, and that the version now offered may prove not unworthy of the original.

P. A. BEECHER.

ST. PATRICK'S COLLEGE, MAYNOOTH.

1st October, 1914.

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

I beg to apologize to the many whose orders for this book have remained so long unfulfilled. The delay has been due neither to the printers nor publishers, but to the unexpectedly rapid sale of the first edition, which, though consisting of more than eleven hundred volumes, was exhausted in six weeks. I avail of this opportunity to thank my fellow priests for their generous response to my effort—a response which makes me feel that my work has not been in vain.

P. A. B.

15th April, 1915.

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[For adaptation of these subjects to the Sundays and Feasts of the year, see Index].

PULPIT THEMES.

THE END OF MAN.

FIRST DISCOURSE.

GENERAL VIEW.

Fear God, and keep His Commandments : for this is all man.—Eccle. xii. 13.

WHAT is my mission in this world ? Why am I placed in this transitory life ? What is the object or end of my existence ? This is the first question, and the one before all others, that should be answered by every man in right reason who enters this world. If a mission be given to any one to perform, it is necessary, first of all, that he should understand the nature of that mission.

The question of one's *end* contains at one and the same time the foundation and guiding principle of human life : the foundation whereon a rational creature builds as it were the edifice of his works ; the guiding principle, according to which he ought to shape all his acts. Thus have acted all who have wisely and holily traced out their course in this mortal life.

In the fourth century there lived in France a young man of noble blood, Hilary by name. Endowed with talent and wealth, the owner of a magnificent home, happily and honourably married, still he felt no peace, for he ever heard a secret voice within his breast, which seemed to say : *Hilary, what is the object and end of your life ?* He could not get away from that voice, for it was the voice of reason. After a time he discovered that the Christian religion alone could give a satisfactory answer, with the result that he joined it. Striving with all his power to attain the end that reason suggested, he rapidly advanced in wisdom and sanctity, became bishop of Poitiers, and is to-day honoured as a saint and distinguished doctor of the Church.

Bernard, for what hast thou come into this world? This is the question which that noble youth, Bernard by name, the flower of the nobility of Burgundy, who later became the flower of Clairvaux, and the light of the twelfth century, ever asked himself. *Bernard, for what hast thou come?* On this his eyes were ever bent; and the thought became the inspiration of his wisdom, the motive of his work, the secret of his sanctity.

Knowledge of his end is to man what the mark is to an archer, what the looked for goal is to a traveller, what the compass is to a sailor, what the pillar of fire was to the Israelites in the desert, what the guiding star was to the Magi when they sought the Messias. . . . Knowledge of one's end is a lamp, lighting the feet of every man who treads the path of life.

The thoughts that spring from this important consideration are many and various, but with a view to order, we shall consider them under the three following heads:—

I. Why should I know my end?

II. What is that end?

III. What does that end demand of me?

I. Why should I know my end?

Under this heading we shall consider the following: the reasons for reflecting on our end; the negligence, forgetfulness, and blindness of men in this regard; the cause of this forgetfulness, and the miserable consequences thereof. Let us consider them in detail.

1°. If we follow the example of people generally, it would appear that no account was to be taken of one's end. Men are accustomed to reflect on all other matters; they occupy their minds about other ends and about affairs of business; but, when it comes to a question of their one supreme end in life, they seem not to care. If, for instance, we ascend a high tower in a large city, and if, let us suppose,

God gave us sufficient clearness of vision to see not only with the eye of the body but with the eye of the mind, what do you think would be the opinion we should form of those who pass under our vision? How few we should find who have any care for their end! Ours would be the estimate of the Psalmist when he said: *The Lord hath looked from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there be any that understand and seek God. They are all gone aside.* Ps. xiii. And how fitting would be the words which we read in Deut. xxxii. 29! *O that they would be wise and would understand, and would provide for their last end!* In fact, many think so little of the end of their existence, that they leave this world without ever realizing why they came into it.

2°. Why should man enquire about his end? Because he ought to know himself: *Know thyself* is an aphorism of wisdom. But, that a man may know himself, he should keep his end before his mind: it is a fundamental notion in regard to everything, is it to be forgotten in regard to oneself? Man should know what reason demands of him; but, that he may know it, two questions must be first answered: whence has he come, whither is he going.

3°. Look to the end is a dictate of prudence. It is likewise an axiom of philosophy: *Finis primum est in intentione, ultimum in executione*—the end is first in intention (in mental aim), the last in execution. Without an end the mind is as a ship without a rudder, tossed about at the mercy of the waves. Or, to use another comparison, a man working without an end is like to one who without a silken thread roams through the darkness of a labyrinth.

4°. What would be thought of a soldier who did not know why he bore arms; of a husbandman who knew not why he was in the field; of a captain who put out to sea without knowing his destination; of a merchant who crossed the seas with a view to business, and returned by the same ship without remembering why he had set out; or of an architect who undertook to build without any definite aim?

5°. Again I ask, why should I know my end? Because as a traveller and a sojourner I should be able to satisfy my

mind as to three questions:—(1) Whence have I come? (2) What am I to do? (3) Whither am I going?

6°. My end! Behold the primary notion of my existence; necessary for every rational being; containing, as it does, the foundation and principle of human life. Necessary for all without exception. In other things men may differ; they may be variously endowed by nature; they may occupy positions far apart; but in this one thing all are equal.

II. What is my end?

1°. It is not what worldlings say it is, but what reason and faith point out. Were I to follow the advice and example of the former, my end would appear to be to amass wealth, and then leave it all at death.

2°. Reason tells me my end is that for which I exist, for which I ought to labour; and which, in labouring, I should ever keep before my mind.

3°. My end is that which God my Creator, in forming me to His own image, intended: what He intended, when by His divine hands He made me, and gave me immortality, and endowed my soul with its various faculties.

4°. My end is that destiny, worthy of my nature most noble, in the possession of which I shall alone find peace. It is opulence, it is glory, it is happiness, not in part only, but capable of satisfying every craving of my soul.

5°. My end is both *ultimate* and *proximate*: my ultimate end is eternal beatitude, or *my salvation*; my proximate end is a good Christian life, by which I can merit salvation.

6°. My end, that is the end of man, is not to enjoy the pleasures of this transient life; much less to live in sin . . . and then fall into hell. . . .—I was born for greater than this. *I was not born*, says Saint Stanislaus, *for the present, but for the future. How does such and such appear in the light of eternity?* was the test of S. Aloysius. What glory, what happiness remain for me! *Lift up thy eyes and see.* Genesis xiii. 14. *O ye sons of men*, says the Psalmist, Ps. iv., *how long will you be dull of heart? Why do you love vanity, and seek after lying?*

7°. This, and this alone, is my end, one to be attained of necessity. To it is opposed eternal perdition. . . .

8°. This end is common to all; it is one and the same, prescribed for all. In this world there is given an extraordinary variety of vocations, some for this pursuit, some for that; but, in regard to the supreme end, all have one and the same calling.

III. What does my end demand of me?

1°. That I think well on it, and ever keep it before my eyes. To this, reason and faith urge me; and not less does the reward, which is eternal glory and happiness in heaven; which is to be put before all other considerations; which is to be purchased no matter what the price, no matter what the sacrifice, no matter what the labour.

2°. It demands that the knowledge of my end be my rule of conduct. I am as the captain putting out to sea. He knows his destination; and the knowledge of it determines whither he turns his prow, to the east, or to the west.

3°. It demands that I tend towards it, and by the straight way, remembering that a twofold path lies before me, one leading to life, the other to perdition.

4°. It demands that I prefer my end to all things else; that I put it before all things; that I do not lose sight of it for any consideration of this world—for neither hope nor fear.

5°. It demands that I look upon all things else, and use them, as *means*: joys, afflictions, virtues, even vices—using virtues as means by practising them; vices as means by avoiding, and thus converting them into stepping stones; joys by moderating them; afflictions by patiently bearing them. . . .

SPECIAL HEADINGS.

From the preceding reflections many particular forms and divisions can be deduced, for instance :—

- I. **What is my end?** II. Should I strive to attain my end?
 III. What must I do that I may attain my end?
-

What is my position in the world?

- I. I am from God. II. I belong to God. III. I go to God.
-

I. Man is the noblest of creatures. II. His destiny is the highest. III. The attainment of **this destiny is the end of his sojourn on earth.**

I. Some there are who live as if they were born for **enjoyment.** II. Others as if born for sin. III. Others as born to **serve God.**

Do all know the end of their existence?

- I. There are some who do not know why they live.
 II. Some who know, but do not take the means. III. Some who know and do.
-

Do all attain to their end?

- I. There are those who have succeeded, the Blessed in heaven. II. There are those who have lost it, the damned in hell. III. There are those who have it in their power to attain or lose—we who live.
-

Will all who are now living attain their end?

- I. All are certainly destined for one and the same end.
 II. All can with certainty attain it. III. Not all, however, will attain it.

I. God proposes an end for man. II. The devil offers another. III. Man has it in his power to choose.

Man should place his end before all things else. I. He is in this world to serve God. II. But at the same time he is here to provide the necessities of life. III. How should both be adjusted, with the latter subordinated to the former?

THE END OF MAN.—(Continued).

SECOND DISCOURSE.

With desolation is all the land made desolate: because there is none that considereth in his heart.—Jerem. xii. 11.

THE prophet of the Lord, viewing the whole earth, saw it desolate with a desolation like to that of a region over which a hostile army has passed. . . . Desolate is all the land, that is every human soul, with the desolation of sin, of remorse, of every form of misery. . . . And seeing that hell awaits the sinner, that heaven is the reward of virtue, that God admonishes men—what, it will be asked, is the cause of this evil, this desolation? The Holy Spirit answers: *Because there is none that considereth in his heart.* And what is this considering in the depth of one's heart that is thus spoken of, that is so necessary? *It is the thought of one's end*; it is the reply to the question, *why am I in this world?* That is the supreme consideration, above all and before all others. A traveller in a strange country should know where he is, and why (for what end) he has come. Such a traveller is man in this world; therefore, it behoveth him to know why he has come, and whither he is going. But alas! how many reflect deeply on other things, but on this, not at all! Therefore, *by desolation is all the land made desolate; because there is none that considereth in his heart.*

Let us not be thus indifferent; let us ask ourselves:

I. What is my end?

II. Should I strive to attain my end?

III. What am I to do that I may attain it?

I. What is my end ?

Sojourner that I am in this world, into which I came but yesterday, and go hence to-morrow, what must I do to-day, for what am I placed here ?

1°. Not for the vain glory it can bestow ; not for the enjoyment of its pleasures ; not to amass its riches. . . . For of these what can I take with me, when I am summoned hence ?

2°. Much less am I here for sin, which but leads to hell. To be sure, there are many who seem to live for this alone. Lest I be of the number, let me ask myself in the depth of my heart, what is the end of my existence ?

3°. *Man*, says Saint Ignatius (Sp. Exercises), *is created to praise God, to show Him reverence, to serve Him, and by so doing to save his soul.* In other words, man is created to serve God in this life, and be happy with Him in the next. Accordingly, the end of man is twofold: *ultimate* and *proximate*.

4°. The *ultimate end* is eternal salvation, that is, that man should dwell in heaven in the house of the Lord, as children dwell in the house of their father What a destiny ! O man, so poor, what treasures are in store for you ! *Lift up thy eyes and see.* . . . Gen. xiii. 14. . . . How, O man, can you prefer to such supreme destiny, the miserable things of this life ; above all, how can you prefer the filth of sin ? What would you think of the son of a king who would leave his inheritance, and go into a far country to feed swine ? . . . Then how, O man, can you adhere to the miserable things of this world, how can you even look upon them, when you reflect what and how great treasures await you in the house of the Lord ? . . . *I rejoiced at the things that were said to me : we shall go into the house of the Lord.* Ps. 121.

5°. The *proximate end* is to serve God in this life, i.e., to keep His commandments, to avoid sin, to perform good works : *If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.* Matth. xix. 17. This observance of the divine law is called the *way*—the way of the commandments of God, the

immaculate way, the way of peace, the way of light : *But the path of the just, as a shining light, goeth forwards and increaseth even to perfect day.* Prov. iv. 18. *Hear, O my son, and receive my words, that years of life may be multiplied to thee. I will show thee the way of wisdom, I will lead thee by the paths of equity.* Prov. iv. 10-11.

This, O man, is the glorious end for which the Lord God placed you in this earth.

II. Should I strive to attain my end ?

1°. By all means. Not only every person, but every thing should attain its end. Thus, to give a few examples, the sun should shine ; the earth should produce the harvest ; the tree should bear fruit—and, to give a human example, a servant in a house should obey his master. . . . In like manner, man should attain his end, not only his proximate, but also his ultimate end.

2°. He should attain his *proximate* end, i.e., he should serve God. If he does this, all is well ; if he does it not, all is wrong. *Fear God and keep his commandments : for this is all man.* Eccle. xii. 13. He who fails to do this is an abomination in the sight of God ; he is, to God's eye, the barren fig tree. . . . He who fails of his *proximate* end cannot attain to his *ultimate* end. And if he fail of the latter, hell shall be his portion, for a middle state there is none. It must be one or the other, heaven or hell, a child of God, or a son of perdition.

That being so, we next ask ourselves :

III. What am I to do that I may attain my end ?

1°. Two things : I must keep it before my eyes, and strive to reach it.

I must act as does the archer who aims at a mark. Or I must imitate the traveller who, for instance, sets out for Rome.

2°. In practice, how am I to keep my end before my eyes? By meditation, by hearing the word of God, and so forth. And how am I to strive to reach it? By subduing passion, and directing all my actions towards the service of God, and the salvation of my soul. This *practical view* of one's end is the great directing principle of human life. He who keeps it not in mind is as the ship without a rudder. This was the guiding principle of the Saints, who, when the empty riches or pleasures of the world presented themselves, said in the words of St. Aloysius: What of this in regard to eternity?

O God, we beseech Thee to imprint on our hearts this guiding principle of life.

THE END OF MAN.—(*Continued*).

THIRD DISCOURSE.

Who art thou?—John i. 19.

IF I view my position in regard to God, I see that I belong to God by every claim, because He is at one and the same time my beginning, my Lord, my ultimate end.

I. I am from God.

II. I belong to God.

III. I go to God.

I. I am from God.

1°. A hundred years ago, and where was I? In nothingness. . . . If I transfer myself in thought to those past years, I find that human beings lived on this earth; but I was not among them. . . . No one so much as thought of me.

2°. To-day I exist, a human being endowed with intellect, with will, with a body highly organised. . . . Who gave me this existence? Did chance do so? No. Did I myself do so? No. Perhaps my parents? No; they would reply with the Mother of the Machabees: *For I neither gave you breath, nor soul, nor life. . . . But the Creator of the world, that formed the nativity of man.* 2 Machab. vii. 22, 23. *Thy hands have made me and formed me.* Ps. cviii. 73.

3°. How, and wherefore, was I created?

(1) The most high God Himself created me . . . and out of His sheer goodness and love: *I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore have I drawn thee, taking pity on thee.* Jer. xxxi. 3.

(2) From eternity the most loving God thought of me. . . .

(3) He chose me in preference to innumerable others, whom He might have created. . . .

(4) In creating me as the noblest creature of the visible world, He made me to His own image and likeness. . . .

(5) God not only created me, but, by conserving me, He every moment renews His act of creating me: *Bless the Lord, O my soul: and let all that is within me bless His holy name.* Ps. 102.

II. I belong to God.

1°. I am from God, therefore I belong to God. God is my Creator, therefore He is my Lord, my king, my father. . . .

2°. What rights has my Creator over me?—Whatever rights an earthly master has over his servant; what rights a king has over his subjects; a father over his children; an artisan in regard to the works of his hands—all these the Creator possesses in a most eminent degree in regard to me. . . . *What have you that you have not received?* 1 Cor. iv. 7. And if God should withdraw His gifts from me, what would remain for me? If He should take away my intellect . . . my power of motion . . . my life . . . my existence . . .? If therefore I have received all things from God, if all I have belongs to God, God has over me perfect dominion: dominion of ownership, that He may dispose of me as He wills; dominion of jurisdiction, that He may command me as He wills.

3°. And what is the nature of God's dominion over me?

(1) It is *essential* and *necessary*, inasmuch as I am His creature.

(2) It is *supreme*: above all and before all I belong to God; accordingly, He must be obeyed, no matter what power, what influence to the contrary.

(3) It is *absolute*: Of me and mine, He can dispose as He wishes. . . . *The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away.* Job. i. 21. *O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it: Why hast thou made me thus?* Rom. ix. 20.

(4) It is *universal* : it extends to all that I possess, and to every moment of my life.

(5) It is *eternal* : it began in time, it will be as everlasting as eternity.

(6) It is *inevitable* : His dominion no one can escape : willing or unwilling, every creature is a subject in the empire of God. . . .

III. I am destined for God.

1°. God, inasmuch as He is my Creator and Lord, is my ultimate end. Because God as a being all wise had a purpose in creating me. As a being most perfect He could not have a purpose other than what tends to His own glory. For His glory, therefore, was I created. And in one way only can I contribute to His glory, by knowing Him, by loving Him, by serving Him.

2°. If you wish to see these considerations set forth in clearer light, ask faith, ask reason, ask creatures, ask your own heart, and your own experience. . . .

(1) Faith says : *The Lord hath made all things for himself.* Prov. xvi. 4. *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and end.* Apoc. i. 8. *The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve. This is the greatest and first commandment.* Matth. iv. 10 ; xxii. 37.

(2) Reason says that there should be proportion between the faculties and their object, or end. But the intellect and heart of man labour under an insatiable desire of knowing and loving, which demand can be satisfied only by an infinite object, that is, God himself : *Thou hast made us for Thyself, and unhappy is our heart till it rests in Thee.* Aug. Conf., l. i., c. 1.

(3) Created things say (in the disappointment which they bring) that they by their emptiness and imperfection can in no way be a worthy or sufficient object of human craving : *Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity, except loving God, and serving him alone.* Imit. I, 1.

(4) Thy heart says that it was made for happiness, and unceasingly aspires after it: for happiness, pure, perfect, eternal . . . such as can be found in God alone.

(5) Experience makes answer that so long as you remain faithful to God, you shall taste peace; that immediately you withdraw from God you find perturbation of soul, remorse, emptiness of heart. . . .

3°. Therefore, to know God, to love Him, to serve Him, is my end; in this accordingly lies my whole duty; in this rests all my glory; from this arises all my happiness.

(1) My whole duty: that is, I ought to worship God by the threefold service already indicated. That alone is necessary for me. All things else, whether riches, or fame. . . . I can afford to let pass. Only let me remember, God is my Creator; I am His creature; He demands my service.

(2) All my glory.—I was born to serve neither man, nor mortal king, nor angel; but I was born to serve Him, *to serve whom is to reign*, God . . . as the angels do . . . as Christ Himself did . . . my end being the same as that of the blessed in heaven. . . .

(3) All my happiness.—To my fidelity to God there is inseparably linked, and to it alone, celestial happiness. . . . So that I am placed between heaven and hell, and I am forced to choose. . . . *I call heaven and earth to witness this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Choose therefore life, that both thou and thy seed may live! And that thou mayst love the Lord thy God, and obey his voice, and adhere to him (for he is thy life, and the length of thy days).* Deut. xxx. 19, 20.

SALVATION.

FIRST DISCOURSE.

GENERAL VIEW.

I. What is Salvation ?

II. What is its Cause ?

III. What are the Means ?

IV. What are the Obstacles ?

V. What does Salvation require of man ?

I. What is Salvation ?

1°. It is the vocation of man to dwell in heaven : *I rejoiced at the things that were said to me : we shall go into the house of the Lord.* Ps. 121. What a high calling ! How great is Salvation ! . . .

2°. Salvation is usually called *saving one's soul*, because it has principally to do with the soul, and with the body only in secondary manner. For the soul shall enter into happiness by itself, and that immediately after death ; but the body only participates in the soul's happiness, and that only after the resurrection.

3°. We must distinguish between Salvation, and the working out our Salvation : the former is the ultimate end of man ; the latter, the proximate end, or the means. *To work out our Salvation, to serve God, to save our soul, these three signify the same thing.*

4°. Salvation is that state to which (1) all men are destined by God ; (2) all, however, do not attain to it. *God will have all men to be saved.* 1 Tim. ii. 4. *Many are called, but few are chosen.* Matth. xxii. 14. *Wherefore, brethren, labour the more, that by good works you may make sure your calling and election.* 2 Pet. i. 10.

5°. It is the great business of man on earth, which concerns each and every one of us : a business the gravity of which is testified to by God himself, by the saints, by the reprobate. It is a personal business, necessary, urgent, deserving of every consideration and sacrifice, and is our primary business, to which everything else must be subordinated.

II. What is the cause of Salvation ?

1°. The principal cause is God, in infinite mercy, *raising up the needy from the earth, and lifting up the poor out of the dunghill, that he may place him with princes, with the princes of his people.* Ps. 112.

2°. The meritorious cause is Christ, who by infinite atonement restored our fallen state—fallen by the sin of Adam.

3°. The immediate efficient cause is grace, and man himself with the aid of grace : *Not I, but the grace of God with me.* 1 Cor. xv. 10. Accordingly, man, each one for himself, must work out his salvation.

4°. The instrumental causes are the sacraments, prayer, penance, and all things else that help thereto.

III. What are the Means ?

1°. The entire Christian life, instituted by Christ to illuminate and strengthen man. . . .

2°. Divine grace, the Sacraments, prayer, the teaching and example of Christ.

3°. Our own co-operation : watch, pray, flee. The fulfilment of the duties of our state of life. . . . Likewise the troubles and afflictions of life ; yes, even all created things,

whatever they be, that come into our path of life can contribute as means to our salvation.

4°. The virtues, and all good works, especially penance, *confession* being a great means. . . .

5°. The observance of the commandments: *If you would enter into life, keep the commandments.* Matth. xix. 17.

IV. What are the Obstacles?

1°. The one great and general obstacle, to which all others are traceable, is *sin*.

2°. Then there is bad example, and scandal.

3°. The inordinate desires of one's own heart.

4°. The ignorance and errors of intellect, and the false teaching of the world.

5°. Too great dissipation of mind—it becomes choked with worldly considerations.

6°. The flimsy pretexts and excuses by which people come to frame for themselves a false conscience. . . .

V. What does Salvation require of me?

1°. That I gain it. And why? Numberless reasons urge me thereto:—

(1) It is my most important work; (2) Because I can and ought to save my soul; (3) Because with my soul saved, everything is gained; with my soul lost, everything is lost; (4) Because if I serve God, everything is gain; if I resist God, everything is loss.

2°. How am I to set about gaining it? To act in this above all other things, efficaciously (not merely resolving, but doing), promptly, with strength of purpose, unceasingly, constantly, with confidence on the one hand, and fear and trembling on the other . . . in a word, as Christ teaches, and as the saints show by example; not after the manner of the many who perish. . . .

3°. How does our present age regard the question of Salvation? We might distinguish three classes of persons. Some treat it as a subject to be despised or neglected; some as a subject only secondary; some, as the primary business of life, to which all things else are to be subjected. . . .

4°. How do I stand in regard to it? What have I hitherto done? What do I intend to do for the future? What shall I one day wish I had done?

OTHER FORMS.

Three things should be considered in regard to Salvation :
I. What is it? II. Why should I strive for it? III. How should I strive for it?

I. Nothing is more precious than the soul. II. If however you consider how men act, you would be inclined to think that nothing was of less value.

I. What does God do for the soul? Everything. II. What does man do? He has no regard for it. III. Whose estimate shall we follow—that of God or man?

I. The soul should be preferred to all things. II. It should be cared for above all things. III. Yet there are those who put all things before the soul, who care for all things before it, their body, their home, their lands, their animals.

I. God wishes to save the soul. II. The devil wishes to damn it. III. And man, what does he wish? . . .

I. God wishes the salvation of man. II. Man himself should will it. III. But if he wills it, he must likewise will the *means*.

I. Nothing can be compared to salvation : neither fortune, nor fame, nor joys, nor temporal life. . . . II. Above and beyond all other considerations, salvation must be first seen to. . . . III. For no consideration whatever must it be jeopardised.

I. What do men do for their body, which is soon to perish ; and to attain fortune, which is soon to pass away ? II. What do they do for the world and for the devil, both which are bent on damning them ? III. What do they do for God and their soul ?

I. What do the world and the devil promise ; and still how are they served ? II. What does God promise ; and still how is His service neglected ? . . . Just a question or two to the man who refuses to serve God. Is God your Lord, or is He not ? Do you believe His promises, or do you not ? If you do not believe, why do you call yourself a Christian ? If you do believe, why do you not serve Him ?

By thy ordinance the day goeth on : for all things serve thee.
Ps. cxviii. 18.

I. Yes, all inferior creatures serve God, each in its own way, doing His will necessarily, and by the instinct of its being. II. Man ought to serve God in his own way, by doing His will as a free agent. III. He who refuses to do it here freely, shall do it hereafter of necessity, just like, and together with, the angels who rebelled.

I. Man, you ought to serve God. II. You ought to serve Him as he wishes, by keeping His commandments, and appealing to His mercy in this life. III. If you do not, you shall serve Him hereafter in a manner not according to your wish. . . .

I. Are those who serve God happy? Yes, twice happy, in this life and in the next : *Say to the just man that it is well, for he shall eat of the fruit of his doings.* Isaías iii. 10. II. Those who do not serve God are miserable here, and shall be doubly miserable hereafter : *Woe to the wicked unto evil : for the reward of his hands shall be given him.* Ibid. ii.

I. The world and the devil are harsh taskmasters, and those who serve them shall have reason to exclaim : *We wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction, and have walked through hard ways.* Wisdom v. 7. II. God is a kind and generous master who says, *My yoke is sweet.* Matth. xi. 30.

In a word, Salvation is the end of man ; it is easy of attainment ; working it out has a sweetness all its own ; and simple are the means : *Avoid evil and do good.* Ps. 30.

SALVATION.—(*continued*).

SECOND DISCOURSE.

For what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?—Matth. xvi. 26.

With fear and trembling work out your salvation.—Phil. ii. 12.

THERE is nothing more frequently or urgently enforced by the Church than the admonition, *the soul must be saved*. This is the sum total of the Gospel, and it is the compendium of all preaching. Hence the frequency with which it is stated. Blessed are they who realise its importance. Woe to those who heed it not! Would that we to-day could grasp its significance, and indelibly impress it on our minds! With a view to doing so, let us consider the following three points:

I. What is Salvation?**II. Why should I attain it?****III. How can I do so?****I. What is Salvation?**

1°. It is the lot of man in heaven for all eternity: *Raising up the needy from the earth, and lifting up the poor out of the dung-hill, that he may place them with princes, with the princes of his people.* Ps. 112. It is called eternal life, eternal happiness, the kingdom of heaven, our home. And its opposite is named eternal death, damnation, etc.

2°. It is a something not merely to be desired, but striven for, and merited : *If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments.* Matth. xix. 17. To neglect it is to commit, and remain, in sin.

II. Why should I attain it ?

1°. Because it contains the sum and substance of happiness for me ; with which nothing temporal can be compared, neither fortune nor life itself.

2°. Because it is my sole business on earth—the reason why I am here.

3°. Because it is the goal of my life's journey, to which everything should contribute, as directly and unerringly as the footsteps of a traveller tend to whither he is going.

4°. Because I am as the merchant whose goods are all in one ship. If that goes down, he is reduced to poverty. I have but one soul, and life's voyage is one. If my soul suffers shipwreck, everything for me is lost.

5°. Because I am placed between two eternities, and must either enter the one, or drop into the other. And if the latter should be my unhappy lot, who shall redeem me ? Not God, for the separation is irreparable and everlasting. Not the devil, for he will delight in tormenting me. Not friends, they are powerless, and no longer, perhaps, even think of me. Not I myself : the only way I could do so is to return to life, but return there is none ; or to do penance, but for that time shall be no more. In a word, if I am lost once, I am lost for eternity : in which case, better for me I had never been born.

6°. Because it is a business special and personal to each one. In other matters one can engage a substitute ; but in this, each one for himself. Personal labour ; personal reward. If you neglect it, who is going to act for you ?

7°. Because it is a work too apt to be neglected. Many things engage our attention ; only one thing is necessary. Beware then, ye rich, ye learned, ye who are given to

indulgence—yet a little while and where will be your riches, your learning, your pleasures?

Question for each one to himself: How do I stand; do I put my salvation before all other considerations? If so, I must employ the following means, and they are by no means difficult.

III. How can I attain Salvation?

1°. What says Christ? Keep the commandments. Matth. xix. 17.

2°. In regard to salvation, we can distinguish various classes of men. Some do nothing to attain it; on the contrary, instead of salvation, their actions tend towards damnation. Who are they?—Some are careless, and fail to attain their end. Who are they?—Others labour with success: those, namely, who act *promptly* and *efficaciously*. Let us examine in detail the meaning of those words:

(1) *Promptly*, that is, it must not be deferred. Grave matters must never be deferred, the more so, if there be danger of loss. Does the farmer postpone the gathering in of the ripened harvest? Perhaps you may say, later I will be converted. Do you think you can do so later? Who has promised you the time, or the will, or the means to do so? What of the many sudden deaths? Again, you may flatter yourself that it will be easier later. Grave delusion! The longer you postpone, the greater the difficulty. You do not wish to be damned, you say. Therefore, do not delay; otherwise you shall be damned; hell is full of those who postponed; the Holy Spirit admonishes us on this point: *Delay not to be converted to the Lord, and defer it not from day to day; for His wrath shall come on a sudden, and in the time of vengeance He will destroy thee.* Eccli. v. 8, 9.

(2) Grace that is offered must not be despised. Where is the prisoner who, when the prison gate is thrown open, or the sick man who, when offered health, says *to-morrow*? Above all, extraordinary grace must not be spurned. Perhaps it

may be the last. There is a certain measure of grace ; God, in the words of the book of Wisdom (xi. 21), has ordered all things in measure, and number, and weight. Resist, if you dare ; but remember that not with impunity are God's gifts contemned : *God is not mocked.* Gal. vi. 7.

(3) One must not remain in danger. Where there is danger of death, or fire, or any other evil, will a prudent man voluntarily remain for one hour ? And do you dare to sleep on the verge of the abyss, perhaps to awaken on the morrow in hell ? Promptly therefore, and without delay, salvation must be sought.

Efficaciously : (1) Not by vain effort ; but by putting your hand to work, in the removing of obstacles, and in the application of the means. And what are those obstacles ? Chiefly, the occasion of sin, and the halter and snare of habit. And the means ? A good confession, prayer, and the exercises of piety.

(2) *Efficaciously*, that is, not by halves. Work only half done always fails, or falls into ruin : what good, for instance, is a house only half built ?

There are those who are always resolving, but who never begin. Others begin, but never perfect their work ; they remind one of a painted soldier, whose uplifted sword never strikes. Some there are who wish to be converted, but will not make up their mind to confess. Some do confess, but their confession is not good. And other some confess well, but do not avoid the occasions of sin, and apply the prescribed remedies : they are willing indeed so long as the labour is light, and no sacrifice required ; but when temptation comes, down they go, first into sin, then into the habit of sin, then into the abyss of sin, and from the abyss of sin into the abyss of hell.

(3) *Efficaciously*, that is, absolutely, without condition of any kind : in the words of the Psalmist (Ps. 118) *I have sworn and am determined* ; in the words of St. Paul (Acts ix. 6), *Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do ?*

For this are required, confession, good, sincere, penitent ; avoidance of the occasions of sin ; use of the means ; change

of life. Behold, O Lord, my heart is prepared ; *have mercy on me and I will pay Thee all.* Matth. xviii. 29.

Peroration.—Let our prayer ascend to Jesus that He may deign to confirm the good dispositions of our heart ; that He may more and more impress on it the significance of the words, *my soul must be saved* ; that those words may dwell in our soul, not as a dry and sterile maxim, but prompting and inspiring words, moving us to accomplish the one great end for which God has sent us here.

SALVATION: ITS OBSTACLES AND MEANS.

Know you not that they that run in the race, all run indeed, but one receiveth the prize? So run that you may obtain.—1 Cor. ix. 24.

LIFE is a race. We are the runners. Salvation is the crown.

If we wish the end, we must apply the means: we must remove the obstacles, and apply the aids. Thus, he who undertakes a journey lays down his burden; the king who tries to recover his lost throne attacks the invader; the farmer who hopes to reap a harvest does not neglect labour. . .

How comes it that of human beings some are good, and some are bad; some are saved, and some are damned? Is it that all cannot reach heaven? Is it that all have not been redeemed? No; Christ died for all. But the reason lies in this, some remove the obstacles and apply the means, while others neglect to do so.

It is necessary, therefore, if we wish to be saved, to act as the former do, remembering, in the words of St. Augustine, that *God who created us without ourselves will not save us without ourselves.*

That we may the better realise this important subject, we shall consider it under two headings:

I. What Obstacles must be removed?

II. What Means must be employed?

I. What Obstacles must be removed?

The obstacles to salvation can be reduced to two kinds or classes: namely, 1° Sin; and 2° What leads to sin, and keeps us in it.

The first great obstacle is sin : the one and only and essential obstacle ; just as death is the end of life, shipwreck, of return to one's country, defeat, the end of victory.

Do you doubt it ? Then listen to the sentence which the Judge will pronounce on the damned : *Depart from me, you that work iniquity.* Matth. vii. 23. Foolish, therefore, is he who tries to reconcile these two, sin and salvation. *What participation hath justice with injustice ? Or what fellowship hath light with darkness ?* 2 Cor. vi. 14.

(1) And what kind of sin proves an obstacle ? Any mortal sin : *one* will do it. The angels were damned for one sin. Perhaps you may say, many have committed mortal sin, and they have not thereby lost hope of salvation. Quite true, if hearing the voice of the Lord they shall not have hardened their heart, and shall have brought forth worthy fruits of penance ; but, on the other hand, hearken to the warning : *Unless you shall do penance, you shall all likewise perish.* Luke xiii. 3.

(2) Mortal sin in the first place ; and venial sin, as lessening grace, predisposing and leading to mortal sin.

The other class of obstacles are those things that lead to, and keep one in sin. They are called in theology the *fomes*, that is, the fuel, and also the roots of sin ; or, to give them the name by which they are best known, they are those that are attributed to the *flesh*, the *world*, and the *devil*.

1°. The *flesh*, that is the threefold concupiscence of money, pride, and pleasure. From these spring all depraved affection, all passion.

(1) *Money*, how does it lead and entice to sin ? Not only by injustice, but through too great solicitude for this filthy lucre : *You cannot serve God and mammon.* Matth. vi. 24. *Blessed are the poor in spirit*, said Christ in the sermon on the mount ; and again : *Seek first the kingdom of God.* Matth. vi. 33.

(2) *Pride*, how does it effect its work ? (a) The longing to please, the fear to displease, the consequent neglect of the sacraments, and the lack of care in regard to modesty. (b) The craving to excel, the unwillingness to be less than others : *Unless you become as little children, you shall not enter the*

kingdom of heaven. Matth. xviii. 3. In other words, so far as the kingdom of heaven is concerned, that is, in things spiritual, we are to become as a child in its mother's arms, and, in particular, as the child born for us in Bethlehem.

(3) *Pleasure*, that is, sensual pleasure. Who does not recognise the old enemy of the soul? And how many sided, and various it is! Pleasure in food and drink; pleasure of the eyes; above all, the grosser forms of carnal pleasure. How opposed to it is the admonition of Christ: *Whosoever doth not carry his cross and come after Me, cannot be My disciple.* Luke xiv. 27. And again: *Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.* Acts xiv. 21. In a word, the key to salvation is, not what pleaseth, but what is commanded.

2°. *The world*, that is, its seductions and appealing attractions, that are ever dragging our souls into the broad way. Viewed in detail they resolve themselves into the following:

(1) *Scandal*: evil conversation, evil society, dangerous friendships; evil education, that product of schools where religion is ignored, if not contemned; the theatre, the dance, the nightly gathering; bad periodicals, and bad books . . . and these to mention but a few.

(2) *Human respect*: the desire to please fellow beings rather than God.

(3) But above all the *Proximate Occasion of Sin*, be the object what it may.

3°. *The Devil*: from whom proceed:

(1) Temptations, or the impulse to sin.

(2) *Delusions*, by which he persuades that such and such an object of pleasure is not a grave sin; that there is no danger of salvation; that death is still far off; that virtue now is difficult, but that later on, on one's death bed, it will be easy. And so forth.

(3) *Evil Doctrines*, which the enemy disseminates by his agents.

Besides those general obstacles, there are others which might be described as particular obstacles, for instance:

- (1) Any predominant passion.
- (2) Some sin concealed in confession.
- (3) Some hatred still lurking in the heart.
- (4) Some bad habit.

(5) There are those, for instance, who complain of their state in life, that they have missed their vocation ; or who complain of their nature or disposition.

(6) There are no obstacles which cannot be overcome ; none which should not be overcome.

(7) Great, if you wish, are the obstacles to salvation : but much greater are the means.

II. What Means must be employed ?

Salvation is not given to us immediately. We are not in heaven, but on earth, on the way to heaven : *He who created you without yourself, will not save you without yourself.* Salvation is not beyond our reach. *God does not demand impossibilities ; but He orders you to do what you can, to ask where your own power fails ; and He assists you that you may succeed.* (Jerome, Letter to Ctesiph.)

1°. *Help yourself*, and God will help you : *To him who does what is in his power God will not be wanting.* Perhaps you may say : I have frequently tried to live well, but I was unable ; God did not seem to assist me. Are you sure that you did your part, that you were not wanting to yourself ? For instance, did you pray, or did you avoid the dangers ?

2°. *Help yourself*, that is, apply the means that are placed in your power.

3°. *The means in general* are : the firm will, prayer, frequentation of the sacraments, hearing the word of God, penitential acts.

4°. *The particular means* are : examination of conscience, almsgiving, fasting, Rosary of the B.V.M., and so forth.

5°. The means of Salvation are to a Christian what wings are to a bird, what wheels are to a carriage ; they are necessary ; they are efficacious ; and they cause neither inconvenience nor drawback in life.

6°. How are the means to be applied? We must distinguish three classes of persons:

(1) There are those who, like the sick that refuse all medicine, reject or neglect all means of salvation, and dilly-dally and delay up to the very time of death.

(2) There are those who only half wise apply some means, such as please them, but neglect other and more efficacious means.

(3) Finally there are those who diligently make use of all means, theirs being the motto of the Psalmist: *My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready.* Ps. 56.

Peror.—Behold the means, many and great, which Divine wisdom and compassion has provided for us; by applying these means and not such as the world and concupiscence would suggest, sinners can emerge from sin, and the just persevere and come to sanctification: thus can I break with sin, faithfully persevere, and in the end attain eternal salvation.

MORTAL SIN.**FIRST DISCOURSE.****GENERAL VIEW.**

They are cursed who decline from thy Commandments.
—Ps. cxviii. 21.

SIN is the one great evil that can befall man, which he ought to hate and avoid, and for which, should he have the misfortune to fall, he should make reparation. Indeed, to make man detest, avoid, and expiate sin, is the end and aim of every sermon on the subject. With a view to securing this end, we shall analyse the motives, or considerations, that lead thereto; which motives may be reduced to the following five heads:

I. What is sin viewed in itself and in its circumstances?

II. What are the effects of sin?

III. What, its causes and roots?

IV. What, the reasons for detesting it?

V. What are the remedies?

I. What is sin?

1°. What do worldlings say of it? What say the saints and religious? What says the world? How does the

Gospel speak? And, to pursue the interrogation further, let us ask, has the Eternal Father spoken; has the Church been silent; have the damned anything to tell us; what does the devil think; and how has Christ spoken?

To ask those questions is to answer them. Indeed, no such interrogation is necessary. The voice of faith and conscience is alone sufficient.

2°. *What is sin*—that we may have a definition of it?

It is a free and deliberate transgression of the law of God. And the transgression may be in thought, word, deed, or omission.

But before it becomes mortal three conditions must be present: grave matter, full advertence, complete consent.

Sin is an offence against the Divine Majesty, before Whom the angels tremble. It is disobedience; it is ingratitude; it is rebellion; it is contumely; it is insolence of the creature towards God the Creator. It is the one and only evil in the eyes of God. Hence the many names which Sacred Scripture and the Church heap upon it, to try to convey to us the magnitude of its evil: *abomination, iniquity, work of darkness, work of the devil*. And, describing it from the viewpoint of its effect on the soul, the Church calls it the *stain, the wound, the death, the putrefaction* of the soul; and again she names it the *fall, the ruin, the shipwreck* of the soul, the number and variety of names bespeaking the fulness of her mind in regard to it. And, if we compare sin with other evils, we find that it resolves itself into a comparison of soul with body. Physical evils affect only the body, they do not exclude from heaven, and can be even turned into good; but sin is evil absolute and unmitigated.

And, not content with the names already given, she grasps at every symbol that might help to describe it. To her it is the *serpent* of Paradise; the fiery *dragon*; the roaring *lion* seeking whom he may devour; the horrible, many headed, crowned *beast* of the Apocalypse; the poisoned *arrow* that wounds the archer himself, which, unable indeed to reach, is shot at God; it is the *forbidden* and *deadly fruit*, the sweet but poisonous *cup* (Prov. xxiii. 31), the death-

bringing *honey* tasted by Jonathan (1 Kings, xiv. 43) ; it is a *trap* and *snare* ; it is the *rock* to be shunned by navigators ; it is a *plague* spreading by contagion ; it is the *abyss* calling to abyss ; it is the *deluge*, the *burning* of Sodom, the idolatry of Israel ; it is the *profanation* of the Temple, the abomination of desolation in the Holy Place ; it is the twofold *captivity* of Egypt and Babylon ; it is the beast devouring the vine (Ps. 79). She has recourse to other symbols and sees sin personified in—King Sedecias deprived of sight and cast into prison—Absalon in rebellion against his father, and slain in war—Goliath slain by David, and Holofernes by Judith—the *traveller* wounded on the way to Jericho—the Prodigal Son—Dives at his banquet—Lazarus in the tomb—in fine, she sees it personified in the Jews who released Barabbas and crucified Jesus.

II. What are the effects of sin ?

1°. In regard to God, it would, if it could reach Him, drive Him from His throne, deprive Him of His perfections, and even destroy them.

It provokes His anger, calls forth His threats, and kindles His vengeance. Hence hell was created ; and if utter malediction was not pronounced on the human race, it is because mercy intervened ; which latter, sin is ever putting to the test.

2°. In regard to the angels, it changed them from angels into devils, the devils being simply angels ruined by sin.

3°. In regard to man, it deprived him and his posterity of the great gifts and qualities with which he was endowed, and cast him into exile and an ocean of misery.

4°. In regard to the human race, some of the effects of sin may be seen in the deluge, the burning of the five cities, in wars, and the countless calamities that have happened since.

5°. In regard to human society, it is seen in oppressions, dissensions, tyrannies, and rebellions—to mention but a few things.

6°. In the family, it destroys order, peace, and happiness, and engenders hatred and bitterness.

7°. As to the soul, sin robs it of every good, and fills it with evil: it profanes, deforms and corrupts it; it wounds and fills it with remorse; it turns the devil and passion loose upon it; it kills and changes it into a corpse, and finally buries it in hell.

8°. And what it is to the devil! It is his triumph, and the means of his derision of Christ: for to Christ the devil can turn and, pointing to a soul in sin, say: *Behold you died for this man, and he spurns you; I did nothing for him, and see how he serves me.*

9°. To the Church it is a source of grief and scandal.

10°. It closes heaven, devastates the earth, and opens hell.

11°. What need to say more? It killed Jesus Christ.

III. What are the causes and roots of sin?

1°. The *formal* cause—by which is meant that without which sin could not be—is the abuse of liberty.

2°. The *impelling* or *occasional* cause—that which urges on, and puts the *formal* cause in motion—may be due to any one, or all, of the following: the devil, temptation, scandal, culpable ignorance, neglect of prayer, unsubdued passion, dangerous occasions.

3°. The *final* cause—that for which sin is committed—is some false, fleeting, temporal good.

4°. The *roots* of sin are: passion, concupiscence in its threefold aspect (concupiscence of the flesh, concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life), evil habit, dangerous companions, rashness in going into danger.

IV. What are the motives for detesting sin?

1°. The first is that sin is the greatest of all evils, indeed the only real evil, with none other like to it, neither loss of

goods, nor imprisonment, nor exile, nor even death. These may be only apparent evils, and can even be made to help us unto good ; but sin, the sole evil, can have but one end, and that is to destroy.

2°. And *destroy* it does in the fullest sense, producing in the soul effects similar to those wrought in the body by death, robbing it of its beauty and its life, rendering it foul and an object of horror, in a manner dissolving and reducing it to nothing, so that only the omnipotence of God can restore it to what it was.

3°. And as for ingratitude, all things animate and inanimate accuse the sinner, for he alone breaks in on the harmony with which all creation obeys God. Even the very demons must, by the contrast of their lot, accuse him : they can say, Christ did not die for me, but He died for you ; I sinned but once, and there was no mercy found ; you have sinned, not once but many times, and you are still spared.

Above all, if only its seeing had not been dimmed, and its feeling dulled, by sin, what an accusation of ingratitude would be flashed in on the soul from the outstretched arms of Jesus on the cross !

4°. If you were to know, O man, what it is to sin, you would never commit such evil, or be guilty of such madness. *Know then and see* (Jeremias ii. 19) :

(1) You invoke on your head the lightnings of God. If God were to say to you, *the moment you sin I will strike you with lightning*, do you think you would sin ? But God threatens not the lightning of the clouds, but much worse, the fire of hell and His eternal malediction. You may say, perhaps, he who sins is not thus struck down. Yes he is, by the curse of God, and the death of his soul. And if he is not plunged instantly into hell, this must be attributed to the mercy of God. Beware, however, of straining that mercy ; in the words of Ecclesiasticus (v. 9), *His wrath shall come on a sudden*, and then, as He said of Judas, better for you that you had never been born.

(2) Also, you renew the Passion of Christ. If you were to see Christ torn with scourges and spit upon, would you

join the torturers ? This, however, is what you do when you sin. St. Paul speaking of those who had fallen away represents them as *crucifying again to themselves the Son of God, and making him a mockery.* Hebr. vi. 6.

(3) You commit parricide, you murder your father. Let us make the following case : the best of fathers has a son whom he dearly loves ; that son is invited by a traitor, his father's enemy, to partake of a cup which for the moment tastes sweet, but the invitation is based on the condition that he murder his father. The case to be sure is wildly imaginary, and too horrible for words. But alas ! it is far from imaginary in the spiritual domain, for that in reality is what the sinner does, or tries to do, to his heavenly Father.

5°. This being so, as also for the other considerations already noted, sin should be dreaded above all other evils ; nothing should be feared except sin : *I will show you*, says Christ, *whom you shall fear*, Luke, xii. 5 ; sin should be detested, expiated, and fled from—fled from, yes *as from the face of a serpent.* Eccli. xxi. 2.

6°. In a word, sin is the shipwreck of the soul. The soul as a ship, laden with God's grace and gifts, sails the ocean of life towards the haven of salvation. By careless navigation, by neglecting the means assigned, and by not avoiding danger, it strikes on the triple rock of concupiscence. It may, perhaps, with shattered hull, still make the port ; but the danger is it may go down never to rise again.

Leaving this figurative representation, one, however, frequently suggested by Sacred Scripture, and coming to the literal, we ask in conclusion :

V. What are the remedies ?

1°. For the past, penance ; for the future, flight ; and when flight is impossible, when the contest must be waged, then let it be with the invincible, double armour of prayer and the sacraments.

2°. The remedies for the living are many and efficacious ; for the dying they are doubtful ; for the damned, there are none.

3°. The remedies too must vary for the different classes of sinners. There are those who fall from frailty ; those who fall from malice ; those who are enchained by evil habit. Still, for the contrite heart, there should be no such word as fail, for the Divine Physician, who knows our needs, has balsam for every wound, the balsam of grace, which He will not withhold from them that seek it.

MORTAL SIN.—(*Continued*).

SECOND DISCOURSE.

THE MALICE OF SIN.

Woe to the wicked unto evil : for the reward of his hands shall be given him.—Isai. iii. 11.

IF only this terrible warning were understood, it would terrify the most daring sinner, and stay him in the course of iniquity. It is the voice and warning of God ; and, nevertheless, the sinner pursues his way, because, for senses dulled, he does not hear, for mind obscured, he does not consider the horror of his life ; neither does he realise the punishment that shall be hereafter meted out to him.

Let us to-day hearken to the voice of the Lord, and, lest we should be caught in the torrent of iniquity, let us take our stand on the solid ground of two considerations:—

I. How does the sinner act towards God ?

II. How does God act towards the sinner ?

I. How does the sinner act towards God ?

His sin is *rebellion*, is *ingratitude*, is *insolence* of the worst kind.

1°. It is rebellion. God is the Creator and Lord of the world, whom all nature obeys ; the sinner alone refuses to do so : *Of old time thou hast broken my yoke, thou hast burst my bands, and thou saidst : I will not serve.* Jerem. ii. 20.

God orders : *I am the Lord thy God whom thou shalt adore.* The sinner answers : I will not serve. And whether God

forbids, promises or threatens, still comes back the defiant answer, if not in words, at least in act, *I will not serve. Who art thou? I know thee not; I have no King but Caesar.*

And who is it who thus addresses the God of heaven? The creature of a day, who to-morrow shall return to the dust from which he sprung.

2°. *Ingratitude*: this same creature of a day has been enriched with God's favours: *What have you that you have not received?* 1 Cor. iv. 7. Your body, your soul, your intelligence, your knowledge, your heart created for things great, your temporal goods, the house you inhabit, the clothes you wear, the bread you eat—from whom are they? Are they not from the beneficent hand of God? The Psalmist with fulness of heart cried out: *What shall I render to the Lord for all the things that he hath rendered to me?* Ps. 115. But you, what return do you make? Where is your gratitude? Have you even kept in memory the thought of it? Horrible to say—you have actually risen against Him who has showered those favours on you.

The Lord Jesus poured His favours on the Jews. The latter seized Him, and put Him away on a cross to die. In this behold your own image, O sinner!

Nor is this all. To such an extent does ingratitude go, that not only is God insulted, but He is so by means of the very gifts that He has bestowed. In this connection Saint Bernard makes the following case as an example: a young man on being restrained for his good by a kind and venerable man of years conceives an undying hatred for him. With alms received from the latter he buys a dagger, which, having first dipped in poison, he strikes into his benefactor's breast. He is arrested, and condemned to death by fire; but through the goodness of a certain prince he is liberated; nay more, the prince himself decides to take his place on the pile of faggots. What would be thought of the wretch thus liberated if he were to come forward and apply a match to the pile? Is it not too horrible, and too out of touch with humanity, to be even supposed in imagination? And yet this is what in reality the sinner does in regard to God. From God he

received life, and he uses it to abuse Him. And as with life so with all other gifts ; his body by acts, his mind by thoughts, his heart by depraved desires, his eyes, his tongue, his hands, the sacraments instituted at the cost of Jesus' blood—everything and all he abuses : in a word, he tramples under foot the Passion of His Redeemer. . . .

3°. Sin, we have seen, is rebellion and ingratitude : it is more, it is *insolence* of the most pronounced kind. The sinner defies God, whilst he is aware that God knows and sees and is present : just as if he were to say to God, I know that thou art present, yet what care I ? Dearer to me is the gratification of this passion than the observance of thy law. I am free and I will use my freedom as I wish.

And not only does he condemn the presence of God, but likewise His omnipotence. Suspended by the hand of God, he is held over the abyss, and at the same time he dares to insult God's majesty.

But let the sinner beware. God is not mocked ; and no one can dare defy Him with impunity. The mills of God may grind slowly, but they grind exceedingly well. Unlike man God seldom takes immediate vengeance ; but remember He never forgets : *Are not these things stored up with me, and sealed up in my treasures ? Revenge is mine, and I will repay them in due time.* Deut. xxxii. 34, 35.

The damning of a soul is such a terrible evil that God, as a rule, has recourse to it only after long forbearance, and after He has exhausted in the sinner's behalf all means of saving him. And this brings us to the next point.

II. How does God act towards the sinner ?

God calls him, and looks for him, and admonishes him, and beseeches him, and threatens him, and at last, with the sword of justice, He smites him.

1°. He calls him : *Jerusalem, turn to the Lord thy God ; Turn ye to me, saith the Lord of hosts : and I will turn to you.* Zach. i. 3. The voice of the priest, the voice of the mother, the voice of remorse, of example, of pious inspiration, is the

voice of God calling the sinner. The sinner, however, closes his ears, turns away his eyes, hardens his heart, and stifles his conscience. He turns his back on God, and hearkens to the devil. God cries out : Turn to me my son. . . . *Why wilt thou die, O house of Israel.* Ezech. xxi. 31. And the sinner answers : I will not return ; the way I have chosen I will not give up.

2°. God looks for him. He says, I will not yet strike him ; I will wait a year, and then another ; perhaps he may arise, and hear my voice. . . . But again is heard the defiant voice of the sinner, I will not listen, one voice alone will I hearken to, the voice of my passions.

3°. He admonishes him. Not only does He stand at the door, but He knocks. Apoc. iii. 20. The sudden death of some one near him ; sickness ; an accident that nearly brought death ; loss of worldly goods ; a sudden light by which he sees the awfulness of his state ; the voice of conscience, calling out to him to see hell beneath his feet, to see the axe laid to the root—what are these but the voice of God speaking through natural causes, and calling to him ? He knows them to be admonitions, he recognises the call, perhaps, he is even terrified by them ; but still he postpones, and says, to-morrow, to-morrow, forgetting that to-morrow never comes.

4°. He beseeches :

(1) *Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children as the hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not.* Matth. xxiii. 37. And in the words of the Church in the agony of Holy Week : *My people, what have I done to thee, or in what have I afflicted thee ?* Again, through the mouth of Jeremias (ii. 21) : *I planted thee a chosen vineyard, all true seed : how then art thou turned unto me into that which is good for nothing, O strange vineyard ?*

He implores the sinner, with the eagerness of a father on his knees at the feet of his son, or as a mother bathed in tears : *Have pity on me, my son, have pity on me : at least, have pity on*

thy own soul. Eccli. xxx. 24 ; cf. 2 Kings xix. 4, and Matth. xv. 22.

(2) And what is the effect of this burning appeal ? There are those—and alas ! they are the many—who despise it, who turn their back on God their father, and shut and harden their heart. But at length the measure of their iniquity is filled. The time of justice comes, the destined hour strikes, and the sinner drops—his body into the sepulchre of earth, his soul into the abyss of hell. For long he tried God's patience, but behold him at last, with his iniquities, in his own place. Now the cry, the appeal, is reversed ; it is the sinner who implores ; but the eternal voice of justice answers back : *Destruction is thy own, O Israel.* Osee, xiii. 9 ; *He loved cursing, and it shall come unto him : and he would not have blessing, and it shall be far from him.* Ps. cviii. 18.

Peror. Is there any one here present who wishes to be in the place of such an unhappy one ? Does any one decide in similar manner to harden his heart ? May God forbid ! Far from me, you will say, be such a thought ! I do not wish to resist God while He calls to me. But I fear my sins may be too great—too much for His mercy. Miserable man that I am, what iniquities, what blasphemies, what impurities, what injustices I have committed—can forgiveness remain for me ? Dearly beloved, do you wish it, do you wish with your whole heart to turn to God ? Yes, you say, I am prepared to do all in my power. Come then, God's mercy is certain, and is awaiting you. But ah ! the obstacle, confession—I know not how to make it. Have no doubt, and put away all fear ; your confessor will help you, and, if necessary, will make it for you. Every confessor is prepared to say to you with Jesus Christ : *Come to me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you.* Matth. xi. 28. To one only does the word *woe* apply—to him who hardens his heart : *Woe to the wicked unto evil.* Isai. iii. 11.

MORTAL SIN.—(Continued).

THIRD DISCOURSE.

THE EVILS OF SIN.

Sin maketh nations miserable.—Prov. xiv. 34.

Know thou and see that it is an evil and a bitter thing for thee, to have left the Lord thy God.—Jerem. ii. 19.

MEN avoid poison, dread pestilence, and flee from wild beasts. But more deadly than poison, worse than pestilence, more fierce and devouring than wild beasts, is sin. And if the world to-day is full of evil, that evil comes from one cause only : *Sin maketh nations miserable.* Prov. xiv. 34.

Let us then consider the sad effects of sin, that we may realise how detestable it is, and thus be led to abhor it.

I. The general effects of sin in the universe.

II. Its particular effects on the soul of the sinner.

I. General effects of sin in the universe.

They are seen in heaven, in earth, in hell.

1°. In heaven : the fall and punishment of the angels. By one sin those princes of the heavenly court were changed into devils, into spirits of darkness. With the speed of lightning they dropped from heaven, and fell into hell.

2°. On earth we see its effect in the punishment of Adam and Eve, and their posterity ; we see it in the deluge, principally for sins of the flesh ; we see it in the destruction of the cities of the plain ; we see it in every calamity that has since occurred ;

we see its unmistakable stamp to this very day in pestilence, and famine, and war, which are but so many scourges on account of sin, for, of a truth, *sin maketh nations miserable*. Prov. xiv. 34.

But, above and beyond all, we see its effect on Calvary. What is sin? Ask of Jesus as He hangs from the cross a quivering weight of agony.

3°. We have seen its effects in heaven and on earth, but to understand sin fully we must go in spirit to hell—to that awful abode where the worm never dieth, and the fire is not extinguished. On the last day, Christ will pronounce the terrible malediction, *Depart from me ye accursed into everlasting fire*. And why? Because of sin: sin, on account of which the earth was cursed from the beginning, *cursed is the earth in thy work*, Gen. iii. 17; now the earth shall be swept clean of it, and sin shall be gathered into its own place—into hell.

II. The effects of sin on the soul of the sinner.

What does man lose by sin; and what does he gain?

1°. He loses the riches of his soul; its merits acquired by so much labour. He loses its beauty: *Though thou wash thyself with nitre, and multiply to thyself the herb borith, thou art stained in thy iniquity before me. . . . See thy ways in the valley, know what thou hast done*. Jerem. ii. 22, 23. And with what heartfelt cry does he bewail in his Lamentations the loss of the soul's beauty by sin! *How is the gold become dim . . . the stones of the sanctuary are scattered. . . . The noble sons of Sion, and they that were clothed with the best gold: how are they esteemed as earthen vessels, the work of the potter's hands? . . . Her Nazarites were whiter than snow, purer than milk, more ruddy than the old ivory, fairer than the sapphire. Their face is now made blacker than coals, and they are not known. . . . They that were brought up in scarlet have embraced the dung*. Jerem. Lament. iv. 1, and following.

Gone is the image of God that once shone there, and in its place is set up the image of the devil; gone is the Holy Spirit

who as a guest did abide there, while the soul's enemy now occupies His place ; gone its peace, and stilled is its life ; it is a corpse fit for the tomb ; and as the angels pass it by they whisper, *dead, dead.*

2°. And what does a man get from sin ?

He gets remorse and terror of conscience ; the chains of the devil ; the devil himself in his heart ; the curse of God even in temporal goods ; *They are cursed who decline from thy commandments*, Ps. cxviii. 21 ; anger stored up for the day of wrath : *Are not these things stored up with me, and sealed up in my treasures ?* Deuter. xxxii. 34 ; and as the end of all he gets hell as his portion.

Conclusion. O miserable sinner, wounded and despoiled by sin ! Does anything remain for you ? Yes, hope of pardon, provided that, while time serves, you make up your mind to repent. Do penance ; expiate past sins, and fly from future ones ; lay the axe to the root of sin, lest God Himself strike the tree : *For now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that doth not yield good fruit, shall be cut down, and cast into the fire.* Matth. iii. 10.

SINS OF THOUGHT.

From the heart come forth evil thoughts. . . . These are the things that defile a man.—Matt. xv. 19, 20.

It sometimes happens—rarely to be sure—that there are persons so poorly instructed, and so deeply ignorant in matters of conscience, as to imagine that mortal sin can be committed only in word or act, and not at all by thought; with the result that they neglect to confess evil thoughts in which they have indulged. What a grave error! The Church in the *Confiteor* puts into our mouth the words, *I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word and deed*. Not only can a person sin grievously in thought, that is, in mind and heart, but therein lies the chief fountain and source of sin. Nay more, words and acts are sins only in so far as they are influenced by, or spring from, an evil mind and will. What could be clearer than the words of Christ on this subject? *From the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies. These are the things that defile a man.* Matth. xv. 19, 20.

In considering this subject, we will for the sake of clearness and thoroughness divide it into three heads:

I. What constitutes a sin of thought?

II. The evils that ensue.

III. The remedies to be applied.

I. What constitutes a sin of thought?

1°. By the word *thought* is meant not only the working of the mind, but the inclination of the will. Thought in this sense

includes mental images, judgments, mental pleasure, desire, and resolve.

2°. Sins of thought are also variously divided ; some regarding God, some, our neighbour, some, ourselves.

(1) Against *God*, are the following : doubting the faith ; murmuring in heart against His divine providence ; not resigning ourselves to His will in what may befall us, and receiving such with impatience ; despairing of salvation or of the possibility of amending our lives ; taking pleasure in loss or misfortune that may befall religion or the Church.

(2) Against our *neighbour* : Suspicions ; wrong or rash judgments ; envy ; deep aversion, especially towards superiors ; anger, malice, hatred, desire of revenge, and particularly resolution for revenge ; wishing our neighbour evil, or rejoicing in evil that may have befallen him ; coveting his property or his position, and so forth ; a most malicious form being joy for the sins he has committed.

(3) Against *ourselves* : Pride, vanity, contempt of others, inordinate ambition for higher state in life, or inordinate desire of honours ; above all, entertaining, or revolving, or dwelling on, thoughts and images against holy purity.

So far for the meaning and divisions of the word thought, we next come to consider the important point that,

3°. Thoughts, no matter how bad in themselves, are not sinful, except they are voluntary, that is, acquiesced in by the will.

There are many souls who are troubled, because their minds are besieged by thoughts against purity, or charity, or faith ; they even fancy that God has abandoned them. But a little reflection should dissipate this error. Let us remember that a man is not bad because he knows or recognises sin, but because he loves it ; and that he is not guilty of sin because he thinks about it, but because he adheres to it in his heart and will. As S. Augustine says, so essential is the will for sin that where there is no will, there can be no sin. Nay more, God Himself is in the heart of the man who is tempted, provided he does not yield to the temptation. Hard is the fight, says S. Bernard, but sweet is the fruit. Even the senses, the enemy

within the camp, may be in rebellion against you ; but remember that the senses without consent can do no injury. The struggle with temptation may indeed be great—for some much more than for others—but there is the consolation that this very struggle is winning for us merit and the crown.

II. The evils that ensue.

1°. Evil thoughts stain and defile the soul. The soul is the temple of God : holy thoughts are the lights, the flowers, the lilies and the roses, by which it is adorned ; but evil thoughts—well, they are best expressed in the words of Ezech. viii. 8, *Son of man, dig in the wall. And when I had digged in the wall, behold a door. . . . And I went in and saw, and behold every form of creeping things, and of living creatures, the abomination.*

They stain and defile the soul. This defilement, although not seen by human eyes, is visible and clear to the eyes of God : *Man seeth those things that appear, but the Lord beholdeth the heart.* 1 Kings, xvi. 7. And again : *You make clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but within you are full of rapine and uncleanness. . . . You are like to whited sepulchres.* Matth. xxiii. 25, 27.

2°. They are the origin and fount of many sins. . . . The soul defiled with evil thoughts is in a manner a poisoned fountain, from which evil actions flow. And, comparing it to a tree, we can say, as is the root so will be the branches ; *If the root be holy so are the branches,* Romans xi. 16 ; but a soul stained by evil thoughts is the *root of bitterness*, by which many are defiled. Cf. Heb. xii. 15.

3°. They disturb the peace of the soul. Peace to men of good will, sang the angels on Christmas morning. But evil thoughts, voluntarily admitted, spell sin and passion and every form of soul-disturbing tumult.

4°. As to thoughts against the character of our neighbour, we can form an estimate of them from the following texts of Sacred Scripture : *He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of my eye.* Zach. ii. 8. And again : *With what judgment you*

judge, you shall be judged. Matth. vii. 8 ; *But if you will not forgive, neither will your Father forgive you your offences.* Matth. vi. 15.

III. What are the remedies ?

1°. The first is to guard against the causes ; and these are :

(1) Wandering and unguarded senses, which easily lead to dissipation of soul. And a dissipated or unrecollected soul is as a house with doors and windows open ; as a garden that is not fenced round ; it is in fact free and open as a market-place. It is necessary for us, therefore, to close the doors and windows of this open house, and we have three keys by which we can do so, vigilance, modesty, and recollection.

(2) Secondly, there is idleness. A limp and flaccid soul is like the field of a lazy husbandman—fallow soil where weeds abound. The plough and harrow of the soul are earnestness and diligence ; if we attend to these, the hand of God will sow the seed.

(3) Sadness and dejection of spirit must likewise be guarded against, for they render the soul morbid ; and a morbid soul is the fertile soil of dark and gloomy thoughts.

(4) Above all, dangerous company and bad books must be avoided, for these are silent and subtle seducers to all manner of evil.

2°. The second great remedy is to resist the first promptings to evil, by closing the portals to the soul. We should act with the promptness of one on whose hand or clothes a spark happens to fall. Evil thoughts are as a brood of vipers, to be crushed in the shell, else, as their kind, they will grow venomous ; they are to be stamped under foot ; or dashed against the rock. Ps. 136.

3°. If, however, they return and continue to annoy us, they are simply to be ignored. They are to be treated as those harmless but troublesome little dogs that barking follow one. It is a mistake to notice them, as they will bark all the more ; just let them alone. Or, to use another example, we are to act as the traveller who, while a storm of dust is passing, merely

closes his eyes, and pursues his course. S. Augustine compares the devil to a chained dog ; he can bark, but he cannot bite, except those who, willing to allow themselves to be bitten, come too close. The unwilling he can never damn. It is permitted to him to solicit the consent, but not to force it. He is a clever trader ; with sleek tongue he can commend his special brand of goods, but he cannot force them on those who are unwilling to buy. . . .

4°. Let us above all recall the presence of God, and exercise the mind in holy thoughts, spiritual reading, and pious meditation.

Thus the soul shall be a temple holy and undefiled, as becometh a Christian : *Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you.* 1 Cor. iii. 16.

SINS OF THE TONGUE.

If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man.—James iii. 2.

THERE is scarcely any gift of the Creator that man abuses more than the tongue. By it so many sins are committed that St. James does not hesitate to say : *The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity.* iii. 6. The metaphor is as apt as it is striking. A spark may cause a conflagration. And how often does a single word carelessly spoken lead to immeasurable evil ! Yes, the tongue is fire, and as fire it should be guarded. Indeed the guarding of it is so necessary, that, without it, there can be no virtue, and no salvation ; for the same Apostle goes so far as to say : *If any man think himself to be religious, not bridling his tongue, but deceiving his own heart, this man's religion is vain.* James i. 26. And, on the other hand, he makes the bridling of the tongue the test of virtue : *If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man.* iii. 2.

From this you will see how necessary it is to guard the tongue, and not to offend in word.

And when do we offend in word ? As often as we abuse this most noble gift of God, by not using it for the end for which He intended ; which is (1) to praise God, (2) to confess our sins, (3) to petition Him for our needs, (4) to serve our neighbour, (5) to enjoy honest conversation.

From this five-fold end we fall away principally by *lying, detraction, scurrility, and blasphemy.* We shall consider the last three.

I.

DETRACTION.

Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth. Ps. 140.

I. What is this vice of Detraction ?

II. Why should we avoid it ?

III. What excuses are usually given for it ?

I. What is Detraction ?

1°. We might begin by saying that it is a sin that is made very light of ; indeed so common is it that it is not rarely found amongst people who otherwise live well.

2°. What then is it ? It is unjust injury to our neighbour's character, by saying something bad about him. What is said may be true or false. If false, the sin is named *calumny* ; but if true, and at the same time unknown and uttered without justifying cause, it is *detraction*. We can describe it as *unjust injury of our neighbour's character by revealing a true but hidden crime or fault*.

3°. Calumny is never under any circumstances justifiable ; for there can never be a cause that will justify a false accusation. It is, however, lawful under certain circumstances to reveal the wrong-doing or fault of our neighbour, even though it should be hidden ; for instance, for the purpose of preventing sin, or for warding off evil, either spiritual or temporal : a case in point would be, if you tell a father about his son, or a master about his servant. In this case there is not *unjust* injury, and therefore no detraction properly so called.

4°. Detraction may be committed *directly* or *indirectly* : *directly*, by openly stating something injurious ; *indirectly*, by insinuation, or manner of action ; for instance, if you

make the statement, "I could say many things, but I prefer to be silent"; or if you are a superior and do not impose silence, when you can conveniently do so; or if you do not defend your neighbour by manifesting the truth which you know; or, finally, if with pleasure you give your ear to detractors.

II. Why must it be avoided?

1°. Because it is *always* a sin, and *frequently* a mortal sin.

When what is revealed is not a serious matter, and has not grave consequences, the sin is venial. But if it is of such a nature as to seriously injure your neighbour, the sin is mortal.

2°. And why is grave Detraction a mortal sin?

Because it violates the natural and the divine law.

(1) It violates the natural law: it is opposed to *justice, charity and order*.

(a) There is a precept of justice which says *render to every man his own*. But what is a man's *own* in fuller sense, or what is nearer or dearer to him, than his good name? It is more precious than gold: *A good name is better than great riches*. Prov. xxii. 1. The loss of goods may be repaired; but loss of fame only with the utmost difficulty, and often never at all.

* "Who steals my purse steals trash; 'tis something, nothing;
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands;
But he that filches from me my good name
Robs me of that which not enriches him
And makes me poor indeed."

More culpable and more detestable even than the robber is the detractor.

Perhaps some one may object and say that detraction is not so severely punished by civil law as is theft. Even so, there is another and higher tribunal, and that is God's; and the question for us is how will detraction be viewed there.

We have now seen that it is opposed to justice. It is likewise opposed to

(b) Charity—to that principle of charity which nature imprints in every breast, and which is expressed in the maxim, *Do not to another what you would not wish another to do unto you.* And who is it that would wish to see his good name taken away by another? Then do not this to another.

And it is opposed to

(c) The natural law of Order, which obliges us to use God's gifts for the end for which they were intended. Why did God give us the noble gift of speech? Was it not for the good of our neighbour, and of society? The detractor, however, uses it to the detriment of society. For what discord, what hatred, what quarrels spring from detraction! Of detractors we can truly say in the words of the Psalmist: *Their throat is an open sepulchre. . . The poison of asps is under their lips.* Ps. 13.

(2) In addition to the natural it likewise violates the divine law. In proof of this, if proof were needed, many texts can be adduced from both the Old and the New Testament: *He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of my eye.* Zach. ii. 8; *All things therefore whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them.* Matth. vii. 12; *Detract not one another my brethren. . . He that detracteth his brother detracteth the law.* James iv. 11. And again, in St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans (i. 30): *Whisperers, detractors, hateful to God . . . are worthy of death.*

Thus we see that the detractor is hateful to God. He is likewise hateful to man: *The detractor is the abomination of men.* Prov. xxiv. 9. Have no misgiving on the point, but rest assured that what the detractor says to you of others he will likewise say of yourself; what he says of your neighbour to-day, he will say of you to-morrow. He is society's greatest enemy, and society should recognise him as such, and put him in his place.

3°. The enemy of God and man, he is still more his own enemy. His tongue is a sword which at one blow inflicts three wounds, one on the absent, or person spoken of; one

on the hearer ; and one, the chief one, on himself. He does not spare others, neither does he spare himself. Detraction, like curses, comes home to roost. He is paving the way for his own damnation. Let him not forget that reparation is necessary ; but reparation is difficult, and is seldom made—so much the worse for himself. Many for this are already damned ; and for many it is the way to damnation. And let no one be so foolish as to salve his conscience by saying, as is often done, after all this is not so grave, and without talk of this kind conversation is impossible. Grave deception, fatal folly !

4°. Grave sin in itself, it is still more so in its consequences. Frequently, nay most commonly, it is the origin and seed of discord. In the Book of Proverbs we read : *Six things there are which the Lord hateth, and the seventh his soul detesteth.* . . . the sixth is, *a deceitful witness that uttereth lies* ; and I ask you in particular to note the seventh : *Him that soweth discord among brethren.* Prov. vi. 16, 19.

In a word, the detractor is like those unclean animals which, while trampling precious things under foot, seek their food amidst offal ; or is like to insects and flies which, passing by the sound parts of the body, fix on sores and ulcers. The comparison is a true one, and if you dislike it, then avoid the ways of the detractor. . .

III. What excuses are alleged ?

They are the old familiar ones, and you will easily recognise them.

1°. What I say is true ; I would not accuse any one of what is false. And is this sufficient to justify you in making public what you know ? What would you think if someone made known your own secret faults ?

2°. I mentioned it only at home within closed doors. And do you think that nothing further will be heard of it ? Is this the example you have given to your children or domestics or others who may have heard you ? Or do

you fancy that closed doors will prevent it from travelling further? Reflect for a moment and ask yourself what have you gained by telling this at home, behind closed doors, as you put it. You have destroyed another's character; you have stained your own soul; you have incurred the obligation of making reparation.

3°. I have mentioned it to only one person, and that in secrecy. Therefore in the estimation of one person you have taken away a good name. And as for the secret, how long will it remain so? Perhaps you yourself got it as a secret. Such secrets in the main amount to this that you got it in secret, you told it as a secret, and it is passed on as a secret. I have heard of persons, and I respect their knowledge of human nature, who, whenever they wished a matter to be made public, gave it to one or two as a secret. Human nature rebels against restraint, and the fact that a certain matter is a secret is too much for many; and the secret only gives pleasure and piquancy to the re-telling.

4°. The thing, you say, was already public. Are you sure that you did not exaggerate it, or add anything false, or anything not already known? Further, are you sure that there was no malice, or vindictiveness in the motive that prompted you? And so forth, and so forth. . .

5°. Others say the same thing, and they are considered good living people; I am not alone in this. So much the worse. There is no true piety without charity. And does the fact that others sin, and damn themselves, justify you in imitating them?

6°. Perhaps it is a question not of speaking but of listening, and you say, I do not speak myself, I only hear others; they do not ask me if it is lawful; nor can I close their mouth.

Very plausible for self-deception. But let us analyse it. Perhaps they speak because they know you sufficiently. If you cannot prevent them, leave if you can; if you cannot, show your disapproval by word or sign. What is to prevent you from changing the topic of conversation? One thing, do not consort with detractors. If there were no one to hear, there would be no one to speak. Rest assured such persons

will talk in the same way about yourself. *Have nothing to do with detractors.* Prov. xxiv. 21. *Hedge in thy ears with thorns : hear not a wicked tongue.* Eccli. xxviii. 28. S. Bernard says that he does not know which is the worse, the detractor or he who listens. If, by listening, you approve or encourage the speaker, you are both guilty of the same sin.

7°. Finally you may say, I am only paying back what I have received ; I only say of him what he has said of me.

O Christian, thou who bearest the name of Christ, what has your Divine Master taught in this respect, or what example has He given ? If you suffer from the tongue of the detractor, by all lawful means defend your character ; but as for attacking in turn, remember who and what you are ; think of your Divine Master.

Conclusion. Let us then in God's name guard the tongue. *Melt down thy gold and silver, and make a balance for thy words, and a just bridle for thy mouth : and take heed lest thou slip with thy tongue, and fall in the sight of thy enemies who lie in wait for thee, and thy fall be incurable unto death.* Eccli. xxviii. 29, 30. Yours be the prayer of the Psalmist : *Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, and a door round about my lips, that my heart may not incline to evil words.* Ps. 140.

II.

IMMODEST CONVERSATION.

Be not seduced. Evil communications corrupt good manners.—1 Cor. xv. 33.

MANY there are, and they are deserving of all praise, who strive with all their power to secure their salvation ; but alas ! there

are others who seem to leave nothing undone to bring about their ruin. Holding a foremost place amongst the latter are those who abuse God's gift of speech by indulging in foul language. We shall then inquire :

I. What is to be thought of such speech ?

II. How are we to act towards those who use it ?

I. What are we to say of him who uses it ?

That he is an impure man ; an enemy to God ; an enemy to his neighbour ; and an enemy to himself.

1°. He is impure. Of what things does a man speak ? Is it not of that which he loves, of which his heart is full ? The avaricious man will talk of riches ; the proud man of vain glory ; the infidel, against religion and its ministers ; the pious man of God, heaven and virtue : because of such things each in turn usually thinks. So the impure man will talk of impure things, because with such his heart burns. Do you wish to know whether such or such a man is chaste ? Then observe his speech. If it be foul, then you may take it for granted that his heart is corrupt, or soon will be. And to you maidens who intend to enter the married state, I say, beware of such an one ; you would be most miserable with him. He may for a time cunningly conceal the bent of his mind ; but after a time his words will reveal to you what he is ; and if he be such as I have described, I say to you, avoid him, shun him, despise him.

Perhaps some one may object and say, is it right to judge ill of one's neighbour ? I answer, not without cause ; but if the proof is evident, the judgment is not rash. And in the case we are considering the proof is beyond question, for the Holy Spirit Himself says, *Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh.* Matth. xii. 34. How does a doctor judge the internal condition of a patient, is it not from the tongue,

and breathing? In like manner experience only too surely confirms the truth of what I have been saying.

2°. He is an enemy to God—yes a most pronounced and hostile enemy, who tries to frustrate the special work of each Person of the Holy Trinity. He is the enemy of God the Father who created man and gave him speech that he might use it in praise of His name: *I have created him for my glory.* Isai. xliii. 7. But from the mouth of the impure man, there proceeds not praise, but contempt, foulness and scandal. He is the enemy of God the Son who did so much for souls. Of these souls the foul-mouthed man conspires with the enemy to rob Him: indeed in this respect he can do vastly more harm, and accordingly is to be more feared, than the devil himself. He is the enemy of the Holy Ghost who gives grace, the effect of which he is trying to destroy or nullify. The Holy Ghost selects the human heart as His temple; but the evil speaker tries to drive Him from it, and aims at setting up there the foul idol of impurity.

3°. He is the enemy of his neighbour. With impure tongue he kills souls, and drags them to damnation. If a murderer be pronounced an enemy, then how much more he who kills the soul? In reality very many more are damned for impurity than for murder. It is aptly named a fire (a presage perhaps of hell fire), lit by a spark, and terrible in its conflagration. And as a rule the spark is—impure speech. *Be not seduced: Evil communications corrupt good manners.* 1 Cor. xv. 33.

And does not experience confirm all this? How many there are who have lost their innocence. If there be any such here listening to me, I ask him, where did you first learn about evil? How did you begin? Was it not because some one uttered in your hearing loose and unbecoming words? Then thoughts arose in your mind; they kindled into desires; you dallied, you fell, and the evil was done. How many now in hell who can attribute their damnation to this cause! How they curse the seducer; how they cry out for vengeance! Oh! if hell were to open this moment, what a tale would be revealed!

4°. An enemy to God, and his neighbour, he is above all *an enemy to himself*. He loses, as we have seen, his good name with his fellowmen, but more than that he merits damnation from God. For how, I ask, can he who damns others hope to save himself? How can such an enemy of God be admitted into heaven? If one mortal sin deserves damnation, what chance has he on whose head so many have accumulated? Cursed as he is of God, only the abyss can be his dwelling-place. One thing is certain, that tongue of evil will yet burn, tormented with its own special punishment. To him in particular apply the words of Christ: *Woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh. . . . It were better for him, if that man had never been born.* Matth. xviii. 7; xxvi. 24.

5°. The corrupter of morals is more to be feared than the Neros and Domitians, than thieves and robbers, than lepers and those stricken with pestilence. The agent of the devil, he does what his master himself is unable to do.

6°. As a stone thrown into water disturbs and agitates it, so a lascivious word falling on the serene calmness of a pure mind, arouses thoughts and images that succeed each other with the intimate connection of cause and effect. S. Basil, in discussing this subject, says that an impure word falling on the heart is as a drop of oil on a garment, at first it appears small, but after a time it spreads. And S. Francis of Sales compares such a word to a spark falling on a roof of thatch!

7°. No more, therefore, of the trashy excuse often alleged, that the word was spoken only in jest, without a bad intention, and that no young people were present. In jest indeed—bless the mark! Let me ask you if it matters whether by jesting, or joking, or laughing, or acting seriously, you go to hell, if, as a consequence, you are sure of getting there? And away with the flimsy excuse, that others say the same things. Is it that you want to accompany others to damnation? How do you know that they say them, except that you keep their company? And last excuse, the words were only ambiguous. *Only ambiguous*; and on that account all the more subtle, all the more dangerous, all the more deadly.

II. How should we act towards those who speak thus ?

I can tell you in a few brief words :

1°. Never imitate them ; never participate in their sin by either listening or laughing. The old maxim is a safe and sure one, if no one listens, no one speaks. . . .

2°. Do not let such an one enter your house. If a thief, or serpent, should enter, how would you act ? But he of whom I speak is more to be dreaded.

3°. Flee from such as you would from those affected with the plague. Murderers of souls that they are, protect your children from their evil breath.

III.

BLASPHEMY.

The mouth of the wicked . . . is opened against me.—

Ps. 108.

In the present discourse there will be question not only of unbecoming words, not only of words out of place in the mouth of a Christian, but of blasphemy in the full sense ; of those forms of expression which the impious, even in their daily conversation, so often have recourse to against God, against Christ, and against His Church. How comes it, you will naturally ask, that a creature can thus speak against His Creator ; above all, that a Christian can be guilty of such impiety ? It is impossible to assign a reason ; it is one

of the mysteries of that strange thing called human nature. Our present purpose is not to ask why—for no answer could be assigned—but to enquire and analyse :

I. How great an evil is Blasphemy ?

II. What remedies are to be used to combat it ?

I. How great an evil is Blasphemy ?

1°. To understand this, it is sufficient to consider (1) How the blasphemer treats God ; (2) How God treats the blasphemer—in other words, how great is blasphemy in itself, how terrible in its punishment and effects.

(1) *How does the blasphemer treat God ?* He curses his God ! What injury, what rashness, what ingratitude !

(a) *Injury* it is, the more atrocious as God is great : *Whom hast thou reproached, and whom hast thou blasphemed ? Against whom hast thou exalted thy voice ?* 4 Kings, xix. 22. *Against the Holy One of Israel.* Picture to yourself the God of heaven whom the angels adore. What earthly king is like to Him ? And yet He it is Whom thou dost dare to blaspheme !

(b) *Rashness* it is, so great that words fail to describe it. What would you say of the man who, suspended by the hair of his head over an abyss, would insult and curse one who held him thus suspended ? And this is what the blasphemer does.

(c) *Ingratitude*—who can measure its depth ? What has God done to you that you should treat Him thus ? What have you that you have not received ? Who gave you the very tongue with which you blaspheme Him ? What would you think of a soldier who should turn his arms against his king ? I could understand the reprobate, and demons, blaspheming their avenger ; I could even understand the action of the Jews who knew Him not ; but thou, O Christian, thou who knowest that He suffered and died for thee, what

excuse hast thou ; or how find words to express the horror that arises in the mind at the mere thought of thy conduct ? The wonder is that the earth does not open and swallow the blasphemer. But still have no doubt on the point, God, though now patient, will yet punish ; His majesty demands it ; and His justice shall see to it.

(2) *How does God treat the blasphemer ?*

Sacred Scripture answers the question :—

(a) *Say not : I have sinned and what harm hath befallen me ?* Eccli. v. 4.

(b) *Woe to the sinful nation . . . they have blasphemed the Holy One of Israel.* Isai. i. 4. And again, from Leviticus (xxiv. 15) : *The man that curseth his God, shall bear his sin—* that is the punishment of sin.

(c) He that dares to curse God shall in turn be cursed by Him ; for there is no sin that so enkindles the wrath of God. Blasphemy is the special sin of the devils and the damned. It is to them what pride was to the angels ; what avarice is to man ; what the instinct to follow the senses is to the lower animals. With the demons and the damned, therefore, the blasphemer ranks himself. What the penitent thief said to the impenitent thief, we can say to the blasphemer : *Do you not fear God ?* Do you not fear His lightnings, and His withering curse ? If you fail to do so in time, you shall feel the folly of your action for eternity. . . .

(d) He shall be cursed in time and for eternity. It has been said, *curses come home to roost*, and this is particularly true of blasphemy : *He loved cursing, and it shall come to him.* Ps. cviii. 18. Yes, it shall come to him, particularly on that day of days when Christ shall say : *Depart from me, ye accursed.* For that dread sentence he is now being prepared by the blindness of mind and hardness of heart which sin begets, especially the sin of blasphemy. As the fire of impurity is indicative of the fire of hell, so the use of the devil's, and his companions', speech is the surest sign and foreboding of what one's lot is to be.

So far we have considered how the blasphemer treats God ; and how in turn God treats, and shall treat, the

blasphemer. But even these two comprehensive points of view are not sufficient to set forth the sin in all its heinousness. What more shall we say?

1°. It is the sin of Julian the Apostate who cast his heart's blood at heaven.

2°. It is an arrow shot at the Almighty, but which descends on the head of him who impiously drew the bow.

3°. It is the crime of the Jews who struck Jesus and spat on His face.

4°. It is the worst of all evils, for, whilst other sins may spring from infirmity, this can come only from malice. Other sins may be committed on account of some false good; but blasphemy can come only from a desire to insult God.

5°. It is the height of insanity. For what, tell me, can be gained? Honour amongst your fellow men? Say rather *horror*, for such is the feeling that blasphemy, even in the minds of those otherwise not free from sin, arouses. Temporal gain? How can that be, when you call down the curse of God? Some pleasure perhaps? Where can there be place, or pretence, for pleasure in insulting God and His Saints?

In a word, it is worse than robbery, than murder, than heresy, than the act of Jew and Gentile in crucifying Jesus. They acted in ignorance, as Jesus Himself said in His appeal for them to the Father; but the blasphemer can take shelter behind no such mitigating excuse. The Mahommedan does not blaspheme his idol, and dost thou, O Christian, blaspheme thy God? Thy sin is without comparison on earth; to match it, one must descend to hell.

Add to all its intrinsic heinousness the scandal that the blasphemer gives, particularly—O terrible thought!—when parents blaspheme in presence of their children, and blasphemy stands forth without parallel and alone. We judge one's nationality by the speech on one's tongue. Whence is thy citizenship, O blasphemer? Thy language proclaims it. Just a little while and thou shalt enjoy the companionship of those fellow-citizens whose language is on thy tongue.

If, however, you have no desire to dwell in their abode, it is necessary to attend to

II. The remedies.

1°. What can I do, you will ask, for I am bound and held by habit? But remember, habit is overcome by habit. You may plead that you are carried away by passion. But are there no other words that you can use? What is to prevent you invoking the Holy Name? I will tell you another excellent remedy: impose a fine on yourself; for instance, resolve that for every time you blaspheme you will give an alms to the poor; and you will find how watchful you will soon become.

2°. Try to conquer yourself. Passion tears the soul, and lacerates the body. It is injurious not only to your salvation, but to your bodily health. It is a fire that consumes tissue and shortens your life. Try then to cultivate a calm, easy disposition. Hold with firm grip of will-power the rising passions in leash, and the consequent victory will develop your character, and will bring you a natural as well as a supernatural satisfaction and sweetness—the sweetness of victory won, and that the greatest of all, the victory of yourself. Above all, pray, pray. Prayer will not only bring you grace, but it has, even from the natural point of view, a peculiar effect in soothing the mind—it is oil for the troubled waters of the soul.

3°. Keep watch over your family, and your domestics; for if you are a master you will be held responsible before God for the blasphemies of those under you.

4°. Place in your home an image of the Crucified, and if necessary attach an inscription, *No blasphemy here*. Consider Jesus crucified saying to you: *My people what have I done to thee, or in what have I saddened thee?*

Whenever you hear a blasphemy say, *Blessed be the name of the Lord*. You might also say each day an *Our Father* and *Hail Mary* for blasphemers.

[If there be a society for extirpating blasphemy, advise your hearers to hand in their name. The preacher could

conclude his sermon on this subject very appropriately with a prayer, such as the following :—

O Lord Jesus, unworthy though I am, I cast myself at thy feet in behalf of blasphemers, and beseech Thee to spare them, even as Thou didst spare those who crucified Thee.]

The preacher might supplement the foregoing by the following reflections :—

He might go through the excuses usually assigned : for instance, “ I was angry and I blasphemed ” ; “ I have got into the habit of blaspheming ” ; “ My companions blasphemed and they drew me on by example ” ; “ If I do not blaspheme, those under me will not obey me ” ; “ I have such trouble from men, from my work, from adversity, that I cannot help blaspheming ” ; “ I blaspheme only when I am drunk, not from malice.” To all which he might reply, it is bad enough to insult God, to curse Him, to strike and spit on Christ, and to wound Him with the weapon of your tongue ; but you are making the case much worse when you actually have the audacity to offer an excuse for doing so.

And as for *ingratitude*, he might say, in the words of S. Polycarp, what has God done to me that I should wound Him ? Or he might represent Christ as saying : “ My son, I have created you, I have redeemed you with My blood, and given it to you to drink . . what, my son, have you rendered Me in return ? Blasphemies. And you blaspheme Me with the very tongue I gave you ? ”

Again he can ask, where does the custom prevail that children every morning salute their parents by cursing them ? But what has God done that you should treat Him as you would not treat the most despised of criminals ? If God is

so hateful in your sight, why do you eat the bread that He daily supplies to you? If Christ is so hateful, why do you still wish to be called a Christian? Why do you keep His image in your home? At least have the decency before you blaspheme of covering His face as the Jews did before beating Him; or rather cast it out, and then—if you must—blaspheme.

SINS OF DEED.

Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness.—Rom. xiii. 12.

SINS of deed are those sins which consist not in thought or word alone, but are consummated in some external act of the senses or members : for instance, theft, murder, drunkenness.

Sinful acts can take place either by commission or omission, according as one commits a sinful deed, or omits to perform what is by duty prescribed. We shall enquire :

I. What are the principal sins of deed ?

II. What are the remedies ?

I. What are the principal sins of deed ?

Some regard God ; some our neighbour ; some have to do with ourselves.

1°. In regard to God. There is neglect of prayer ; neglect of Sunday Mass ; neglect of Easter duty ; abuse of the sacraments ; profanation of the Lord's day by servile work, done either by ourselves or by those subject to us ; violation of the law of fast or abstinence ; irreverence in Church ; human respect and cowardice by reason of which one is ashamed to perform the duties of one's religion.

2°. Regarding our neighbour, the following are examples : disobedience and irreverence to parents ; saddening or provoking them ; on the parents' part, neglect of the education of their children ; grave neglect in either the care or correction of domestics, or others under their charge ; especially giving them bad example.

Pursuing one's neighbour with hatred, or causing him grievous sorrow or trouble ; laying violent hands on him ; murdering him spiritually by giving grave scandal ; pouring into his ears the poison of impure speech, whether in the form

of joke or otherwise ; putting bad books in his way ; seducing or otherwise leading to sin ; prompting or encouraging to intemperance, and so forth—it is not necessary to go through the list in detail.

3°. In regard to ourselves. Neglect of the duties of our state of life ; intemperance in food or drink ; impurity ; exposing ourselves to the occasion of sin, by keeping dangerous company, reading bad books—to mention only a few examples.

II. Remedies.

Since the sins mentioned come principally from sensuality, they can be best met by fleeing the occasion, and by mortification.

1°. By the occasion is meant any place, person or thing which leads to sin ; for example, an evil companion or a bad book. . . . The occasion may be either necessary or voluntary. Here we are considering only the latter.

The occasion of sin must at all costs be avoided : *He who loveth the danger shall perish therein.* Eccli. iii. 27. The reason for this is the weakness of human nature. What the sun is to wax ; what a match is to straw ; what a spark is to powder—that the occasion is to human nature. And does not experience prove it ? How many were good and ceased to be so ; how many might be good but are not—and why ? Because of the occasion : it was a case of the straw and the match ; and then the fire of sin, followed by the cold ashes of remorse. On no other subject perhaps has Christ spoken with more force : *If thy eye scandalize thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee.* Matth. xviii. 9.

2°. The second great remedy is mortification.

What is mortification ? It is a virtue by which we deny our senses what they desire, whether in seeing or hearing, in food or drink, in rest or in any form of pleasure that is pleasing to them. It is, to give an example, treating our senses as a driver treats a beast of burden. The animal may want to stop on the way to graze, or drink, or rest, or to turn aside into another road, but the driver makes it obey him. So in

mortification ; the will is the driver ; the body is the beast ; the different forms of sensuality are its cravings. There are two grades of mortification : (1) denying ourselves what is forbidden ; to this we are all bound ; and (2) denying ourselves in those things about which we are free, for instance, abstaining from meat on a day when it is not forbidden by law. . . .

Here some one may ask, whether, for instance, bearing sickness with resignation, and putting up with the defects and annoyances of one's neighbour are acts of mortification ? Well, strictly speaking, they are not, but are acts of patience, which is a sister virtue to mortification.

3°. We sometimes hear it said, I would apply the remedies, but they are no use to me, I am too much bound by bad habit. . . .

But do not forget that habit is overcome by habit. Evil habit indeed deepens more and more the wound in the soul. But the doctor who treats the wound is Jesus Christ, who differs from earthly doctors in this, that He can heal all wounds if only we apply His remedies. . . .

4°. Finally, it may be asked, if flight and mortification are sufficient ; if prayer and the sacraments are also necessary ? The four are necessary in the same way that four wheels are necessary for a carriage. Flight, mortification, prayer and the sacraments—on these four spiritual wheels our life will run safe and smooth. . . .

[For more on this subject, the preacher may consult the sermon on "Conquering Passion," and the one on "Carrying the Cross."]

THE SEVEN CAPITAL SINS.

And I saw a beast coming out of the sea having seven heads.
—Apoc. xiii. 1.

THE seven capital sins are so called because they constitute as it were the entire *body of sin*—*corpus peccati*, Rom. vi. 6, and are the compendium of all vices. Or, to use another figure, they form as it were a very troop of sin, of which the leader is pride.

If we examine them we find that, properly speaking, they are the *seven* inordinate passions, which are the roots or sources of all sin. The seven may be taken together and viewed as one, and then they are called concupiscence, which concupiscence—this seven in one—is the outcome of original sin. It is, in a manner, an infernal monster with seven heads. To slay this monster, the seven heads must be cut off. If six be destroyed and one remain, even that one suffices to devour the soul. We shall then consider each head separately.

I.

PRIDE.

I. What is Pride, and how is it committed ?

II. Why should we flee from it ?

III. How can it be avoided, or what are the remedies ?

I. What is Pride ?

1°. Pride is usually defined as *an inordinate desire of one's own excellence*, or of greatness that does not belong to one

From it spring seven vices ; namely, vain glory, boastfulness, ambition, presumption, hypocrisy, obstinacy, and contempt of others.

2°. By pride, however, as it is commonly opposed to the virtue of humility, we mean every act by which man esteems himself above what he is in the eyes of God. God's estimate is the standard of judgment, and anything that deviates from that is pride.

The important thing for man, in order to form a true estimate of his standing, is to know, and act up to, his relation to God and his fellow-man. In his relation to God, he is a *creature*, who has received all things from the Creator ; a *debtor* or *sinner* who has not wherewith to pay ; a *servant* whose proper glory should be to serve his Master : *It is great glory to follow the Lord.* Eccli. xxiii. 38. In regard to his neighbour, his standing is that of fellow-servant of the Lord, whose relations with men should be characterised by fraternity and equality—that is equality before God. But better, and much safer, than equality would be the feeling of inferiority, for the consciousness of sin and unworthiness.

We are apt to lose sight of our equality before God on account of our varying stations in life ; which is a very great and dangerous mistake. An example will illustrate it. Suppose, for instance, that a rich person took three poor starving men into his service, and, having supplied them with food and clothing, appointed one to till his fields, another his garden, and took the third into his household. They would still be fellow-servants, equal before their master ; and the merit of each would be estimated, not from his position, but from the fidelity with which he performed his duty in it. Before God we are all like those three servants. Let us not mistake our station, be it high and great, for merit. Fidelity alone will count in God's eyes. But pride is likely to assert itself and prompt one to say or think, *what I have is mine* ; or, in the words of the Pharisee, *I am not as the rest of men.*

3°. The great image and example of pride is Lucifer, who said : *I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above*

the stars of God. Isai. xiv. 13, 14. Also Aman, Jezabel, Nabuchodonosor, the Pharisee, and Simon magus. . . .

4°. Acts of pride may be committed in mind, in heart, in word, and in work.

(1) *Pride of mind.* It consists in a great and false estimate of oneself. The proud man forgets that he is at the feet of God ; that as a creature he has nothing except what he got from God. On the altar of his pride he sets up an idol, which he thinks all should bow to ; and the idol is himself. He contemplates this idol—this *Ego*—and it seems to him to be endowed with every perfection, and of faults to have none, or at most but slight ones. On the other hand, he sees only the defects of his neighbours, and is blind to their merits ; and, like the Pharisee, comes to think that he is not as the rest of men. It is a case of seeing with different eyes—the right eye for himself, and the left for his neighbour.

(2) *Pride of the heart.* The man who is proud of heart is full of false ambition : he longs to be seen, to be praised, or inordinately desires to be raised to higher station in life. He is never content with what he has, because he thinks he is deserving of more. If he undertakes any work, he is disturbed and too solicitous about its success, lest he should be humiliated. And, on the other hand, if he succeed, he is puffed up, and despises others—in other words, his pride of heart becomes pride of intellect, both being different hues of the same colour.

(3) *Pride of tongue.* This we all recognise. We all know the man who is constantly boasting before others of all he has and possesses—his talent, his fortune, his blue blood, his achievements in life—to mention only some of those vapourings with which we are so often bored. How carefully too such an one conceals or excuses his faults ; while finding fault with the doings and sayings of others ! How sternly, and with what magisterial tone, he judges of all, and does not hesitate to pass censure ! How touchy in conversation, how tenacious of his opinion, and of course he is not to be contradicted ! He is the sort of man one wishes dearly to

avoid, for the hated spirit of pride is in his face, in his eye, and in his every gesture.

(4) *Pride of work.* The man who is afflicted with this form of pride does everything that it may be seen or praised by men. If he distribute riches, he will take care that it will not be for the good of the poor, but for something that will be talked about. Towards his inferiors he is invariably sour and discourteous, and, amongst his equals, domineering and arrogant. He neither seeks nor listens to advice, and if it be offered, he is either angered, or quietly ignores it.

II. Why should we flee from Pride ?

There are the general reasons on account of which we should avoid all sin ; but, passing over these for the present, we come to the particular reasons, and they are the following :

1°. In the first place, it is the vice of the devil, who is the spirit of pride itself : *Thy pride is brought down to hell.* Isai. xiv. 11.

2°. Because the vice is hateful in the eyes of God, whose glory the proud foolishly try to usurp : *God resisteth the proud.* 1 Pet. v. 5. *I will not give my glory to another.* Isai. xlii. 8.

3°. It is likewise hateful in the eyes of men. Who can bear with a man who in his heart, as you can judge, looks down on you, or who inflicts on you his arrogance and boastfulness ? Human nature has pronounced its universal judgment in regard to him.

4°. Then the vice is so foolish and ridiculous. You have heard the fable of the jackdaw that went strutting about in the feathers of a peacock, and of the ass which claimed for himself the beauty of the harness that he had on. These two examples give us a perfect illustration of the folly of the proud man.

5°. It should be avoided on account of the punishment that always follows it, namely, humiliation. For this we have Scriptural warrant : *Everyone that exalteth himself shall be humbled.* Luke, xviii. 14. And the proud man shall be humbled

not only in the future life by falling into hell, but even here by falling into contempt amongst his fellow-men, and, still worse, into many vices, even into impurity. See Rom. i. 22, 24.

6°. Again, there are the other evils that ensue :

(1) It generates all vices. As charity is the queen of virtues, so pride is the prince of vices : *Pride is the beginning of all sin.* Eccli. x. 15 ; *Never suffer pride to reign in thy mind, or in thy words : for from it all perdition took its beginning.* Tob. iv. 14.

(2) From it proceed contentions, quarrels, envy, hatred, and other vices. . .

(3) Pride obscures the intellect, and, like smoke, overclouds it : in this way it is the mother of imprudence, and the beginning of ruin. . .

(4) It excites the heart, and does not permit it to rest. It is to it what the wind is to the sea. Only he who is humble of heart finds peace of soul : *Take up my yoke upon you and learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest to your souls.* Matth. xi. 29. And in Osee we read : *He who sows the wind shall reap the whirlwind.* Osee, viii. 7.

7°. To describe its emptiness and folly, we must have recourse not to one, but to many illustrations. As wind extinguishes a lamp, so pride puts out the light of the Holy Spirit ; it dries up the dew of grace ; it raises in the mind the dust of a thousand vain thoughts, which obscures and soils it.

As a spider exhausts its substance in spinning webs to catch flies, so the proud man spends the energy of his soul in trying to catch vain and empty praise.

It is like to a tinkling cymbal, to sounding brass, to an empty vessel, to the worthless thistle flower, to a barren mountain, to a rock standing bare and high.

It is the statue of Nabuchodonosor, with head of brass and feet of clay. It is as ascending smoke which, while rising, loses itself in air ; it is the worm of the soul, feeding on the fruits of virtue ; it is a bellows that blows to life and heat the latent passions.

8°. What wonder then to find that the proud man neither prays well, nor believes well, nor hopes well, nor loves God and his neighbour well ; because he is too much preoccupied with love of himself.

III. What are the remedies against this vice ?

1°. Every habit is overcome by its contrary. Thus too can pride be conquered. And its contrary is humility.

2°. We have the example of Christ and the Apostles : *Learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart.* Matth. xi. 29. *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus : who . . . emptied himself, taking the form of a servant.* Phil. ii. 5.

And St. Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians (vi. 14) says : *God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.* . . This too was the example of all the Saints. . .

II.

AVARICE.

I. What is Avarice ?

II. Why should we avoid it ?

III. What are the remedies ?

I. What is Avarice ?

1°. It is usually defined as *An inordinate desire of riches and worldly goods.*

2°. And this inordinate desire may manifest itself in various ways, such as (1) coveting another's goods, receiving, and retaining them ; (2) too selfishly preserving, and too miserly

dispensing, what belongs to one, especially when the call for alms is urgent, either for the Church or for the poor ; (3) too great solicitude in acquiring worldly goods, that is, a solicitude which is unreasonable. This latter may be compared to the thorns which, growing up, choke the good seed. And how easily and readily persons suffering from this soul-stifling solicitude try to excuse themselves by apparently plausible reasons—children must be provided for ; a store must be laid up for the rainy day, and for old age ; the family dignity and position must be maintained ! By these pretexts is forgotten that Christian prudence which should place more confidence in the providence of the Heavenly Father than on one's own industry : *Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God, and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you. . . . Be not therefore solicitous for to-morrow, for the morrow will be solicitous for itself.* Matth. vi. 33, 34. . . *Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee ; and whose shall those things be which thou hast provided ?* Luke xii. 20.

II. Why should avarice be avoided ?

1°. First because of the foolishness of this vice. Avarice is to the Christian what the idol was to the pagan, and the golden calf to the unfaithful Israelites : *Avarice is a serving of idols.* Ephes. v. 5. Even in the common estimation of men, disgrace attaches to the very name of *avarice*. S. Bonaventure very aptly compares an avaricious man to a hog, which is of use only after its death.

2° On account of the punishment attached to it. Recall the parable of Dives and Lazarus. Dives refused Lazarus even the crumbs that fell from his table ; but he died and was buried in hell. Dives is for all time the type and example of the avaricious. Nay, even in this life, avarice brings its own punishment ; for the disappointments and worries and anxieties with which the vice bristles are as so many thorns to the mind—it is the hedge-hog amongst the vices.

3°. On account of the terrible threats thundered by Christ against the lovers of riches : *Woe to you that are rich.* Luke, vi.

24. . . *A rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.* Matth. xix. 23.

4°. Because it dries up the heart and saps the soul ; for the avaricious man can love nothing, and can think of nothing but his filthy lucre : *Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.* Luke, xii. 34. It drags man down to the level of a beast that noses in the earth. It is to the soul that would mount what bird-lime is to the wings of a bird. *It is the root of all evils.* 1 Tim. vi. 10. It is the halter that hanged Judas. . . *Nothing is more wicked than the covetous man. . . There is not a more wicked thing than to love money : for such a one setteth even his own soul to sale.* Eccli. x. 9, 10.

5°. The avaricious man is like to one who is dropsical—the more he drinks, the more the thirst increases. He might be compared to Tantalus, who, immersed to his lips in water, was still tormented with thirst.

6°. The Holy Spirit admonishes us against it : *If riches abound, set not your heart upon them.* Ps. lxi. 11.

7°. Finally there is the difficulty of eradicating it ; it grows with the growth of years, until at last it grips the soul with bands of steel. It is insatiable as *the earth thirsting for water, and the fire which never says : it is enough.* See Prov. xxx. 15.

III. The remedies.

1°. Generosity towards the poor and the Church ; which virtue usually brings with it the sweet reward of consolation.

2°. Meditation on the example of the Eternal King, who, *being rich, became poor for your sakes.* 2 Cor. viii. 9.

3°. Reflection on the end for which worldly goods are given. What are they but means and helps by which, if properly used, eternal riches can be acquired ? If not properly used, if turned to wrong use, they become only a delusion and a snare. . .

4°. Ask yourself the common-sense question, what will become of your wealth when death calls you ?

5°. Consider the eulogium pronounced on the poor of spirit, the first of the beatitudes : *Blessed are the poor in spirit ; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* Matth. v. 3.

III.

LUST.¹

I. The horror of lust.

II. Its awful effects.

III. The remedies.

I. The horror of lust.

1°. When man sins by pride, he sins like the angels ; when he sins by avarice, he sins as man ; but when he sins by impurity, he makes himself a brute.

2°. By this vice the Christian, regenerated and sanctified, becomes an unclean animal : *Man when he was in honour did not understand : he hath been compared to senseless beasts and made like to them.* Ps. xlviii. 21. . . What would you say if you saw a king lying down with swine ; a queen, resplendent with jewels, rolling in the mire ; or a rich man turning away from a sumptuous banquet, and searching for food in an ash barrel, or amidst sewage ? Such in the natural order are but a feeble illustration of what the Christian does in the spiritual order.

3°. This vice in her children is the opprobrium and disgrace of the Church : it is the stain, the black smudge, on the white garment of the spouse of Christ. . .

4°. Why the very name itself—what horror and disgust are attached to it !

5°. Even the devil himself is a stranger to it ; by his very nature he must loathe it ; only the man-brute who noses in the earth is capable of it. . .

¹ See Sermon on *Gates of Hell*, p. 252.

II. Its awful effects.

1°. Enumerate, if you can, the sins of thought, word, and act that arise from this vice, as well as the sacrileges that ensue, and we are compelled to say that this is the sole sin which steepes all the senses in iniquity. . . .

2°. From which follow darkness of mind, hardness of heart, and, after a time, the mad intoxication that flings the reins loose on the neck of passion. Then comes loss, the fourfold loss, of peace of mind, of freedom of soul, of fame, and of fortune. . . .

3°. By it man becomes wholly carnal, with the instincts and blindness of the beast : *My spirit shall not remain in man for ever, because he is flesh.* Gen. vi. 3. . . . *He that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption.* Gal. vi. 8. . . . *The sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the spirit of God.* 1 Cor. ii. 14.

4°. There is no vice so difficult to be eradicated : *His bones shall be filled with the vices of his youth, and they shall sleep with him in the dust.* Job. xx. 11.

5°. It is the widest gate that opens into hell. . . .

III. The remedies.

1°. Watchfulness. A guard must be placed over the heart and the senses. The prophet Jeremias says : *Death is come up through our windows.* ix. 21. . . . *Fly fornication.* 1 Cor. vi. 18.

2°. Prayer. *As I knew that I could not otherwise be continent, except God gave it.* . . . *I went to the Lord, and besought him.* Wisd. viii. 21. . . . And with prayer should be linked that other great remedy—frequentation of the sacraments.

3°. Mortification, temperance, fasting. *This kind can go out by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.* Mark, ix. 28.

4°. Removal of the causes, which as a rule are : over-indulgence in eating and drinking, idleness, pride, familiarity with persons of the opposite sex. . . .

IV.

ENVY.

I. What is Envy ?

1°. It is an inordinate jealousy in regard to our neighbour's good, inasmuch as it surpasses and obscures our own.

2°. It has pride for mother, and anger as its sister.

3°. Its attendant acts are: *hatred* of one's neighbour, when his prosperity surpasses one's own; *joy* at seeing him in difficulty; *grief* at seeing him exalted; lending a dull ear, when his praises are spoken, and a ready and willing ear, when there is question of his faults or something spoken of him in censure or criticism; finding fault with him, and with what he does; making little of or concealing altogether his good points; and, when afraid to find fault openly, uttering poisoned words under the guise of praise—in other words, the sugar-coated-pill method.

II. Motives for avoiding it.

1°. It is a mean and petty vice. It is the vice of Cain, of the brothers of Joseph, of Saul. It is the vice that led to the condemnation of our Blessed Lord: *He* (Pilate) *knew that for envy they had delivered him.* Matth. xxvii. 18. It is the vice of the devil; the vice that prompts him to tempt men: *By the envy of the devil, death came into the world: and they follow him that are of his side.* Wisd. ii. 24, 25.

2°. Envy might be regarded as the poisoned and sulphurous breath of an infernal monster that blasts and consumes everything on which it falls. . . .

3°. What the worm is to wood, what rust is to iron—that envy is to the soul. . . . The envious man is a slayer of his own soul. . . . The ancients personified Envy as a hag, skinny and haggard, feeding on serpents, and dwelling in a dark cavern. . . .

III. Remedy.

1°. Fraternal charity and beneficence.

2°. Contempt of temporal goods, and appreciation of virtue only.

3°. Humility. *I have chosen to be an abject in the house of my God.* Ps. lxxxiii. 11.

4°. In healing the envy of others towards you, do not forget to take advice from humility and charity.

V.

GLUTTONY AND INTOXICATION.

GLUTTONY.

I. What is Gluttony?

1°. It is an inordinate desire for eating and drinking.

2°. A sin of gluttony can be committed in six different ways, for instance :

(1) There may be a violation of the precept of fasting or abstinence.

(2) There may be sin, by reason of the time or place : food may be taken too often, or in a place where it would be unbecoming or disrespectful to take it, in a church, for instance.

(3) There may be sin by reason of quantity ; if too much be taken, or if the amount injures the health of either body or soul ; or if drink is indulged in to the extent of disturbance or loss of reason.

(4) Gluttony can be committed by reason of the quality of the food or drink : if one uses food or drink that are too choice, and beyond one's position to afford.

(5) Also by reason of the end : if one eats for the sole pleasure of eating, and for the gratification of the senses.

(6) Finally sin may be committed by the mode or manner of eating : if food be taken in animal fashion with too much eagerness or in an unbecoming way, or with such haste that one seems totally immersed in the process.

To this also belongs too frequent talk of the good things of the kitchen.

II. Motives for avoiding it.

1°. How gluttony appears in the eyes of God may be judged from the punishments meted out to it. Adam and Eve by yielding to gluttony, in partaking of the forbidden fruit, lost the gift of innocence, and their state of happiness, and were expelled from paradise. The Israelites were smitten because, while in the desert, they inordinately longed for flesh : *As yet their meat was in their mouth : and the wrath of God came upon them ; and he slew the fat ones amongst them.* Ps. lxxvii. 30.

2°. The rich man who feasted sumptuously is in hell, and his lot should be a warning to the gluttonous lest *fire and brimstone and storms of winds shall be the portion of their cup.* Ps. x. 7.

3°. It is such a degrading vice, and makes one so vile and despicable, like unto the brute. Nay, do we not wrong the brute in saying so, for it will only eat till satisfied ? If a comparison can be made at all, it can only be with the pig. The glutton has been named, and rightly, an eating machine ; a being whose occupation in this life is the consumption of food, than which what can be imagined more degrading ? Speaking of this class of persons—or animals should we not rather say ?—St. Paul says : *Whose God is their belly : and whose glory is in their shame.* Phil. iii. 19.

4°. As we should naturally expect, it renders a man unfit for mental effort, and for all forms of literary work. It obscures the intellect, and clogs the mind. It is to the intellectual powers what stains of grease are to the face of a crystal. Indeed it is generally recognised that a full stomach begets a sluggish brain.

5°. It is injurious to health and shortens life. Half the diseases by which mankind is afflicted come from intemperance in eating and drinking. . . .

6°. It injures the soul, not only by the direct sin of gluttony, but likewise it begets a distaste for prayer and converse with God, and renders it incapable of spiritual consolations. In a word the spiritual man becomes merged in the carnal : *But the sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God . . . and he cannot understand.* 1 Cor. ii. 14.

7°. We have already seen that it clogs the intellect, but it likewise makes heavy the heart, producing laziness and inertia, and rendering it unfit to undertake or perfect any great work in the divine service. In fact gluttony goes through the soul as an ass through a garden—stupidly trampling under foot flowers and fruits, and looking only for hay. *He is compared to senseless beasts, and is become like to them.* Ps. xlviii. 13. . . . *They changed their glory into the likeness of a calf that eateth grass.* Ps. cv. 20. . . . *Give not that which is holy to dogs : neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest perhaps they trample them under their feet.* Matth. vii. 6. . . . *Take heed to yourselves, lest perhaps your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness . . . and that day come upon you suddenly.* Luke, xxi. 34.

8°. It is the procreant cradle of innumerable vices, particularly of impurity. It feeds the fire of passion with the oil of the humors that it arouses in the body. Hence Thomas à Kempis says (i. 19) : *Bridle gluttony, and thou shalt the easier restrain all carnal inclinations.* And taking the converse of this we can say : *Indulge gluttony, and thou shalt the easier indulge all carnal inclinations.*

III. The remedy.

The opposite virtue, namely, temperance in food and drink.

1°. The advantages of this virtue in the natural order are : health of body, health of mind, a long and happy life ; hence the axiom, *mens sana in corpore sano*—a sound mind

in a sound body. . . . *In many meats there will be sickness . . . but he that is temperate shall prolong life.* Eccli. xxxvii. 33, 34. . . . In the spiritual order we can say of temperance what the Church chants of fasting : *Vitia comprimit, mentem elevat, virtutem largitur et præmia*—it restrains the vices, elevates the mind, gives strength and rewards.

2°. With a view to temperance it will be helpful to bear in mind the following principles :

(1) Man does not live to eat, but eats to live. In the use of food, as in all things else, he should follow reason, and not the prompting of appetite. And in this respect reason's measure is determined by the requirements of soul and body for their appointed functions.

(2) Never give rein to the appetite ; but always before eating decide how much it is well to take. This amount can be ascertained by experiment.

(3) Think of the example of Christ and His Saints : the gall and vinegar of Calvary ; the herbs and roots of the early Fathers of the desert.

INTOXICATION.

I. Motives for avoiding it.

1°. It is a horrible and disgraceful vice. The drunkard is an enemy to himself and a calamity to his family.

(1) An enemy to himself—what does he lose, and what does he gain ? He loses his reason, his character as a man, his health, his time, his fortune, and his reputation. And what does he gain ? The malediction of God, and hell. Intoxication is not only a mortal sin in itself ; but it is the fertile source of many sins ; it foment's impurity ; incites to blasphemy ; gives rise to fighting and quarrelling, and generates wicked habits.

(2) The drunkard is a calamity to his family : to his wife who dreads his return ; to his children whom he scandalizes, whose education he neglects, and whom he often leaves without

bread ; to his parents, on whom he brings sadness and disgrace. Not without cause does Isaias thunder his withering denunciation : *Woe to you that rise up early in the morning to follow drunkenness.* Isai. v. 11.

2°. The drunkard sins against God, against his neighbour, against himself.

3°. The drunkard by rendering himself irrational is no better than a wild beast, nay, is worse than a beast of burden, from which he might learn a lesson in temperance. . .

4°. Drunkenness is idolatry, and the idol is the stomach : *Whose God is their belly.* Phil. iii. 19. To him can be applied the words of the Psalmist : *They have mouths and speak not ; they have eyes and see not ; they have ears and hear not . . . they have hands and feel not ; they have feet and walk not.* Ps. cxiii.

II. What are the causes, and what, the remedies ?

The publichouse and bad companions step by step lead him into the habit. Occasions, and empty pretexts, confirm it. He says to himself : after the week's labour can I not have a little enjoyment on Sunday, especially as I am determined not to lose my reason ? Isaias was not speaking of those who fall in the gutter, nor of those who have lost their reason, when he said : *Woe to you that are mighty to drink.* Isai. v. 22.

To a great evil strong remedies must be applied : fly the occasion, have recourse to penance, frequent the sacraments. . .

VI.

ANGER.

I. What is Anger ?

1°. It is an inordinate desire of avenging one's injuries ; or it might be described as a certain inordinate burning of

heart, on account of something untoward or displeasing that has happened to one.

2°. Anger has many grades. Sometimes it is merely an internal agitation by which bile and heat are aroused. And this agitation finds expression, now in darkness of countenance, now in tremor of hands, now in glance of the eye, or in stammer of tongue ; again, in harsh and steely voice, bitterness of word, and haste of movement ; and not infrequently it breaks forth in violence of action.

3°. From it three classes of sin spring, namely :

(1) Of *thought* : such as hatred of one's neighbour ; secret aversion ; purpose and desire of vengeance ; longing that evil may befall him ; joy, if it does befall him, or if anything goes wrong with him ; disappointment and regret at his success or prosperity.

(2) Of *tongue* : addressing him in harsh, bitter, or biting words ; contentions, disputes carried on with obstinacy with a view to victory over him, regardless of right or wrong ; in his absence, vindictive words, detractions and calumnies. . . .

(3) Of *action* : injuring him by hand or tongue ; causing him pain and grief ; putting obstacles in his way, for the sole purpose of revenge ; unwillingness to meet him, to salute him, to do him a kind turn, or utter a pacifying word ; wearing towards him a bitter countenance, and reviling instead of speaking to him. . . .

4°. The companion of anger is *impatience*. And we are guilty of impatience, when, on account of something untoward affecting us, we give way to an inordinate and too great desire to be freed from it. From this arise many sins against God, against our neighbour, and against ourselves. Such as querulousness ; an complaint against the Lord for having afflicted us ; lack of confidence in Him, together with incipient blasphemy ; diffidence, weariness of life, desperation, and even desire of death. And these feelings frequently find expression in acts ; such as moroseness towards others, and particularly towards domestics and members of one's own household ; towards the poor dumb brutes, and even in regard to

insensible things. Jonas in this respect is an example of the impatient man, venting, as he did, his anger against the withered ivy for letting the sun beat on his head. Jon. iv. 9.

Note an angry man, see the foolishness and the temper with which he conducts himself towards domestics, superiors and inferiors: *Be not as a lion in thy house, terrifying them of thy household, and oppressing them that are under thee.* Eccli. iv. 35.

II. Motives for avoiding Anger.

1°. What a loss it entails! It robs a man of dignity and makes him mean and despicable. As S. Basil says, anger changes a man into a brute animal, a wild beast, a rabid dog, a stinging scorpion, a serpent that bites and kills.

2°. It drives one to temporal insanity, and to foolish acts. It even disturbs the reason—*The light of the eyes itself is not with the angry man.* Ps. xxxvii. 11.

3°. It renders human intercourse disagreeable and intolerable. It closes men's hearts against us, and checks their faith and confidence in us.

4°. It takes away from life its sweetness; it disturbs peace, and precludes the consolations of the Holy Spirit.

5°. It destroys man's likeness to God, who, as the sun, is ever serene and benignant, *reaching from end to end mightily, and ordering all things sweetly.* Wisdom, viii. 1. It makes man like the devil—that restless and raging spirit; it brings him down to the level of the brute beast, which nurtures a dead life, dead to reason and consciousness, and moved only by blind inclination and instinct.

6°. Finally it incurs God's wrath: *I say to you that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council. And whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.* Matth. v. 22.

III. Remedies.

1°. Mildness and patience, by which a man bears every inconvenience, and every injury, with equal and undisturbed mind ; or if aroused, let him be without quarrel and without sin, preserving the dignity of silence, or uttering only the calm word that makes for peace. The remedy of St. Francis of Sales was *silence*. I have made, said he, a compact with my tongue, that so long as my mind was disturbed it should preserve silence.

2°. Humility. Know thyself, and, knowing thyself, thou wilt be able to say in every trial and affliction : I have deserved worse.

3°. Consider the blessings of meekness : *Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land.* Matth. v. 4. *In your patience you shall possess your souls.* Luke, xxi. 19. *My son, do thy works in meekness, and thou shalt be beloved above the glory of men.* Eccli. iii. 19. *The patient man is better than the valiant : and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh cities.* Prov. xvi. 32.

4°. Reflect on the example of Christ and His Saints ; for example, Moses and St. Francis of Sales. *Moses was a man exceeding meek above all men that dwelt upon earth.* Num. xii. 3. . . Above all, we have the example of Christ who said of himself : *Learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart.* Matth. xi. 29.

5°. Devotion to the Sacred Heart. By such devotion the meekness which Christ declared of His Heart will be shared by us : *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.* Phil. ii. 5.

VII.

SLOTH.

I. What is Sloth ?

1°. It is tediousness and torpor or listlessness in fulfilling one's duties.

2°. If it be considered in regard to the duties of religion and piety, it is as a rule the same as *tepidity* ; but in regard to the ordinary duties of life it is named *idleness* or *laziness*.

3°. It is the opposite of diligence or studiousness.

4°. It carries many vices as companions in its train, such as :

(1) Fear of labour, and avoidance of it.

(2) Pusillanimity in undertaking, even for God's honour, anything that implies difficulty.

(3) Torpor, languor, tardiness, negligence in acting.

(4) Inconstancy in carrying to a conclusion any good work that may have been undertaken.

(5) Rancor towards, and dislike of, those who are studious, or who have shaken off the torpor of laziness.

(6) Too much rest and too much sleep.

II. Motives for avoiding it.

These are based on the losses and inconveniences that accrue therefrom ; namely :

1°. Tedium and ennui. Man is born for labour, and only in labour and in the exercise of his faculties can he find happiness : *Desires kill the slothful*. Prov. xxi. 25.

2°. Loss of precious time. Only the diligent and studious appreciate what this means ; while the slothful so often quote, and act on, that maxim which is as false as it is hackneyed, *time is made for slaves*. Some day they will realize that time was made for them, but, slaves to sloth, they foolishly let it slip by.

3°. It breeds numberless sins of negligence and omission.

4°. Also many sins of commission. Sloth is rightly named the *origin of all evils*. The slothful man needs no devil to tempt him, he is his own devil ; or rather his laziness is a couch whereon the devil rests beside him. And this couch becomes the procreant cradle of feastings, of lust, of detractions, of conspiracy and rebellion : *Idleness hath taught much evil*. Eccli. xxxiii. 29. Above all it is the dam of concupiscence, of voluptuousness, of impurity, and it suffocates virtue. Labour, on the other hand, is the instrument of virtue. In a word, the slothful man receives his appointed task from the devil, and what is more he does it. How significantly our Blessed Lord sums up all in a few words ! *While men were asleep the enemy came*. Matth. xiii. 25.

5°. Idleness is the key to indigence and poverty. The slothful man wishes to eat the nut, but he is too lazy to break the shell. In the Book of Proverbs, xxiv. 30, 31, we have a vivid description, true to life, bearing on this subject : *I passed by the field of the slothful man, and by the vineyard of the foolish man : and behold it was all filled with nettles, and thorns had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall was broken down*. And again : *He that tilleth his ground shall be filled with bread : but he that followeth idleness shall be filled with poverty*. Prov. xxviii. 19.

6°. The soul of the idle man is like the farm just described ; or it is like stagnant water where serpents spawn ; or it is like a plough left unused in the field, with rust corroding it. Indeed idleness is the rust of the soul, eating more than labour wears.

7°. Now as to the excuse the idle have recourse to, *I am injuring nobody*. On this point S. Chrysostom has a few pertinent remarks : *Suppose*, said he, *you had a servant who was neither a robber, nor detractor, nor a dissolute man, but who spent his day with folded arms, would you not dismiss him ?* In like manner the slothful man—to say nothing of other vices—is before God a servant with folded arms.

8°. Finally, and above all, he incurs the threats and maledictions of God, and they are found in both the Old and

the New Testament : *Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully*—that is negligently. Jeremias xlviii. 10. . . . *Because thou art lukewarm, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth.* Apoc. iii. 16. And in the New Testament we are told that the idle servant who hides his talent is cast by the Lord into exterior darkness. Matth. xxv. 30. Again Christ says : *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire.* Matth. vii. 19.

III. Remedies.

1°. A spirit of work, or of study, and earnestness.

2°. Reflection on such examples as those of Samson, David, and Solomon, who could trace their fall to sloth.

3°. The example of God the Father, and of Jesus Christ. *My Father worketh until now : and I work.* John v. 17. *I must work the works of him that sent me, whilst it is day : the night cometh when no man can work.* John ix. 4.

4°. The example and admonitions of the Apostles : *Neither did we eat any man's bread for nothing, but in labour and in toil we worked night and day, lest we should be chargeable to any of you. Not as if we had not power ; but that we might give ourselves a pattern unto you, to imitate us. For also when we were with you, this we declared to you, that if any man will not work, neither let him eat.* 2 Thess. iii. 8, and following.

5°. The example and admonitions of the Saints. The anchorites divided all their time between manual labour and prayer. S. Alphonsus Liguori made a vow never to waste a moment of time, and he observed it faithfully. S. Jerome used to say : *Let the devil find you always occupied.* And an ancient poet has well said : *If you take away idleness, you break the bows of Desire.*

6°. We have also in this respect the example of worldlings : *The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.* Luke xvi. 8.

7°. The example of even the inanimate world urges us thereto. The sun is ever shining ; stars are ever twinkling ;

the sea is ever rolling ; the earth is ever labouring, and bringing to maturity wheat and corn and wine. . . .

8°. Then, above all, there is the final reward : *Well done good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over a few things I will place thee over many things, enter thou into the joy of the Lord.* Matth. xxv. 21. And in the joy of the Lord the good and faithful servant shall, after life's struggle, find eternal rest *from his labours.* Apoc. xiv. 13.

SCANDAL.

Woe to the world because of scandals.—Matth. xviii. 7.

THERE is a certain sin that Christ singled out for special denunciation; and that is the sin of scandal. *Woe to the world because of scandal.* *Woe!* because scandal is an atrocious crime, and one that angers God beyond others. *Woe!* because it sweeps through the world as a scythe through a meadow. *Woe!* because terrible are the punishments that await it.

Let there be no mistake about it, the Master has issued His anathema in words of thunder: *Woe to the world!* The awful pronouncement is for all, for the guilty and for the innocent; to the former that they may arise, repair the evil, and thus escape punishment; to the latter, that they may be on their guard, neither to give nor take scandal.

While those words are graven on our mind by God's chisel of anathema, let us in His name consider:

I. What is Scandal, and by whom is it committed?

II. How great is this sin?

III. What are its punishments?

IV. What reparation is possible?

I. What is Scandal?

1°. There are those who think that for scandal there is always required some great public sin, such as would entail loss of character. But scandal can be of a most pernicious kind without becoming public. What then is meant by scandal?

2°. The word itself means something that causes one to stumble ; and by the sin of scandal is meant any unbecoming word or act that is the occasion of spiritual ruin to another. Let us examine this definition.

(1) *Word or act.* From this you see that scandal can be given in two ways, by bad words, and evil acts. (a) How by words ? For instance, by speaking against religion, against piety, against charity, against chastity ; or, by blasphemy, by derision, by detraction, by foul speech, and by sowing the seeds of discord. Likewise by selling or distributing books or pamphlets that will prove a stumbling-block to virtue.

(b) How by acts ? For instance, by corrupting youth, either by seductive words, or promises, or threats ; by leading the young into bad company, by getting them to perform sinful works, or by enticing or encouraging them to look at dangerous spectacles or objects ; or by spreading a snare for the feet of innocence and weakness, in the form of unbecoming dress. Also by exposing to their eyes indecent statues and pictures.

Scandal in act can also be given by bad example, such as not going to church, or by irreverence there. All which scandal becomes more grave if given by parents or superiors ; or before the young ; or before those who are weak in virtue. . .

(2) *Which is the occasion of spiritual ruin.* This ruin is either intended by the scandal-giver or it is not. If intended, the scandal is *direct*, or, as it is also called, *diabolical*. So we can briefly describe *direct* or *diabolical* scandal as the *intention of ruin for ruin's sake*. The other—that is where ruin is not intended—is called *indirect* scandal ; but, though indirect, it is thorough scandal all the same, and as such comes under the anathema of Jesus. And why not ? Suppose, for instance, that, without taking any precaution whatever, a man cast from a height a log of wood on to a promenade where people were passing, would not the law, and every sane person, regard him responsible if any one was injured ? Would not his ridiculous excuse that he intended no injury be scoffed at ? In like manner, not only of direct or diabolical scandal, but likewise of indirect, did Christ speak when He uttered the

awful words: *Woe to the world because of scandal.* Matth. xviii. 7.

II. How great is this sin?

It is an *atrocious*, a *satanical* sin, and one that enormously *multiplies* itself.

1°. An atrocious sin: yes, both in regard to God, and in regard to our neighbour.

(1) In regard to God: because it robs Him of what are most dear to Him, human souls. It robs them from the Father, to whose image they were created, and by Whom they were adopted in Baptism. It robs them from the Son, who redeemed them by His blood: *Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died*, says St. Paul in speaking of those who by eating meat scandalized the weaker brethren. Rom. xiv. 15. It robs them from the Holy Ghost, who sanctified and adorned them, and made them the temple of His habitation.

The aged Jacob when he saw the coat of Joseph cried out in distress: *It is my son's coat, an evil beast hath eaten him, a beast hath devoured Joseph.* Gen. xxxvii. 33. And the same must be the feelings of the Heavenly Father, when He sees the havoc wrought in the soul of one of His beloved by the scandal-giver. Why wonder then at the strong words? *Woe to the world because of scandal.*

(2) *In regard to our neighbour.* The scandal-giver deprives the soul of its beauty, and changes it into a monster. He kills the soul: he commits fratricide, and fratricide worse than that of Cain, for Cain merely took away the life of the body. Absalom killed his brother Amnon while banqueting, but it was on account of a grave injury, the disgrace of his sister. 2 Kings xiii. Thou too, O miserable man, thou hast slain thy brother at a banquet, but what reason canst thou assign? What did thy brother do to thee? Perhaps you did it to gratify a foul passion? Or maybe for the pleasure you experienced in telling a filthy joke? Merciful heaven! had you no thought of the abyss of evil into which you were plunging him? in comparison with which the slavery and

imprisonment of Joseph were as nothing. Did you not hear the voice of his father and of his mother? They cried out, but you were too deaf, too preoccupied with your sin, to hear. The temporal parents cried out in the burning words of the griefs that were to be; but still more did his spiritual father and mother, Christ and the Church, call to you, in the language of appeal and threat, to spare that soul. Thou cruel man, said Christ, spare that soul whom I have created, endowed with gifts and graces, nurtured, redeemed, and given in charge to my angels. But the scandal-giver is moved by neither threats nor appeals. He says in the words of the Jews bent on condemning Christ: *We have a law and according to that law, he should die.* Is not this the voice of the devil, who was a murderer from the beginning? Of a truth the sin of scandal is a diabolical sin.

2°. Truly diabolical, satanic sin—which becomes more and more evident when we analyse it. The scandal-giver, like the devil, acts oppositely to Christ:

Christ labours for the glory of God, and the salvation of men; the devil opposes both—the scandal-giver does the same.

Christ saves souls; the devil damns them—the scandal-giver does the same.

Christ fills heaven; the devil fills hell—the scandal-giver does the same.

Christ sprinkles the odour of life; the devil the odour of death—the scandal-giver does the same.

Christ takes away the sins of the world; the devil propagates and multiplies them—the scandal-giver does the same.

Christ aids and gladdens the Church; the devil attacks and afflicts it—the scandal-giver does the same.

Christ sows good seed in the field of the Church; the devil sows cockle—the scandal-giver does the same.

Nay more, the power of the devil would be much reduced, were he not so aided by the scandal-giver, for his is the evil hand that scatters most of the seed from which springs the cockle that chokes the wheat of virtue in the Church.

3°. It is a sin that multiplies itself.

(1) A single bad seed can fill not only a field but a whole country-side with weeds. And to this can be compared the sin of scandal. The scandal-giver by an evil word corrupts someone; this person corrupts another, it may be an entire family; and in this way a very desolation of evil may be traced to the scandal-giver.

(2) It is as a spark cast amid the dry brushwood in a forest.

(3) It bears a certain parallelism to original sin, which brought both sin and death into the world.

(4) It will do its work of havoc even after the scandal-giver has gone to judgment, just as the heresy of Luther is still doing harm after three hundred years. The vitiating power of evil is extraordinary: "*Know you not,*" says St. Paul, "*that a little leaven corrupteth the whole lump.*" 1 Cor. v. 6.

(5) It is like a pest or plague, which spreads by infection and contagion. And like the plague it must be fled from.

For these considerations the sin of scandal is horrible beyond all others; and we can understand why the Lord pronounced against it that terrible word *woe*. Let us reflect what this *woe* means, that is, let us consider:—

III. What is the punishment that awaits this sin?

1°. The punishment is beyond question. Do you think that such a crime could remain unpunished? O scandal-giver, look at your hands; they are dripping with blood, the blood of your brother. Can such blood remain unavenged? The Jews shed the blood of the Son of God, saying: *His blood be upon us*. And did it not descend upon them? Thou too hast shed blood—the blood of Christ's mystic members.

2°. The blood of Abel cried from earth. But the voice of thy brother, yea rather of thy brothers, cries from hell against thee. And what does it say?

3°. God said to Cain: *Where is thy brother?* And then came the withering malediction: *Cursed shalt thou be upon the earth, which hath opened her mouth and received the blood of thy brother at thy hand*. Gen. iv. 11. In like manner He says to the scandal-giver, *Where is thy brother?* Where? He is dead, he is in hell.

But God in due time will be avenged. *Revenge is mine, and I will repay.* Deuter. xxxii. 35 ; *I will require his blood at thy hand.* Ezech. iii. 18.

4°. *Woe to that man by whom scandal cometh. It were better for him that a mill-stone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea.* Matth. xviii. 6, 7.

5°. He who kills his fellow man is usually haunted at night by dreams and phantasms of his deed. The scandal-giver will one day be haunted too ; it will be the awful time of his death, when before his eyes will arise as a great army, not only his own sins, but those of others. S. Francis Xavier saw at his death those who were saved by him. But the scandal-giver will behold those whom he damned. He will see the tears of broken-hearted mothers, as they sigh for their children whom he led astray.

And when he passes through the gates of death, and goes to the place prepared for him, those whom he damned will for eternity pour into his ears the shrieks of their agony and their curse. . . .

IV. What is the remedy ?

1°. Of course it is easier to inflict a wound than to heal it ; and easier to start a fire than to put it out.

2°. All the same, one who has inflicted an injury is bound to do all in his power to repair it ; and the graver the injury, the weightier the obligation of doing so, even though it should involve inconvenience to oneself.

3°. Reparation for injury to souls, unlike ordinary injuries, is not effected by mere repentance ; but in addition it is necessary to give edification. Have you wounded, killed or damned souls ? If you wish to atone, you must bend your mind to the sanctifying and saving of souls.

4°. You must give good example ; which (1) is directly opposed to scandal ; which (2) should shine forth in word, and still more in act ; which (3) is a silent but efficacious sermon. *Vir bonus aspectus et cogitatus emendat* (it improves one to see and study a good man). Seneca. To give a concrete

example, those who refuse to attend a mission are sometimes won over by the advice and good example of one who was once their accomplice in sin.

5°. Good example, like footsteps along a path, not only shows the way, but makes it level and easy for the timid, whom also it strengthens, heartens and draws. *Words move, example attracts. Rather long is the way by precept, short and sure by example.*

6°. Good example is moreover a fire that warms all who come within its reach. Saint Wenceslaus, Duke of Bohemia, went one night with a servant through the snow to adore in a church. The latter felt the cold very much, but the saint went first, and advised him to step in the track he himself had made for him; whereupon, we are told, the cold turned to pleasing warmth. Such, in the spiritual order, is the influence and effect of good example.

7°. In fact good example is a kind of apostolate, which we are all bound to engage in: *He gave to every one of them commandment concerning his neighbour.* Eccli. xvii. 12.

In particular, there is the far reaching domestic or family apostolate, which is exercised by spreading, if not so much the word, at least the odour and example, of Christ.

8°. Here is a practical rule of life: do good at home, do good abroad, do good in the Church, by example always, and by the prudent word, spoken when opportunity offers.

Peror. If scandal has abounded, let your good example more abound, like St. Paul who said: *I persecuted the Church of God . . . but I have laboured more abundantly.* 1 Cor. xv. 9. Or, like the debtor in the Gospel, let us say: *Have patience with me and I will pay thee all.* Matth. xviii. 26.

By the ploughshare of your influence you may be able to turn up the fallow soil where the weeds of your scandal abound; then sow there the seed of virtue and merit, which will increase and multiply. . .

If, unhappily, some have perished through your fault, at least strive to make amends by saving others; and thus the horrible spectacle of those who were damned shall be offset by those who were saved by your influence and example.

SPECIAL HEADINGS.

The scandal-giver is I. an instrument of the devil,—II. a plague,—III. a curse.

1°. For, as Christ chose His ministers as instruments for good, so the devil selects his for evil. As of old Satan used the tongue of the serpent, so now he uses the tongue of the scandal-giver. He goes about in search of a suitable agent. He sees a young man, and he says to him: *Young man, you can help me to damn souls: this is how you will go about it, scatter impure and suggestive words, and I will give you your reward—hell.*

He sees the father of a family, and he says to him: *You can help me to damn your son, and your daughter; it is quite easy, just send them to a certain school, and leave them with a certain companion.*

2°. *It is a pest.* How men abhor a contagion, and how they flee from it!

3°. *It is a curse.* It is such in this world, it shall be such in judgment, it shall be such in hell. *Cursed be he that secretly killeth his neighbour: and all the people shall say: Amen.* Deuter. xxviii. 24.

I. How grave is the sin of scandal?—II. Who are they who cause scandal?—III. What is the punishment?

Woe to the world because of scandals!—I. Woe to those who give scandal, or who through their own fault take it or suffer it to befall them.—II. Double woe to them who scandalize those who are under them, or whom they are bound to protect from it.

Scandal is—I. a most grave injury to God,—II. a grief to the Church,—III. a calamity to one's neighbour, and to the scandal-giver himself.

HUMAN RESPECT.

He that shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him the son of man shall be ashamed, when he shall come in his majesty, and that of his Father, and of the holy angels.—
 Luke, ix. 26.

OF the many chains by which the devil draws souls away from good, and binds them in sin, there is scarcely any so deadly as human respect.

By human respect I mean sinful shyness or cowardice by which one feels ashamed to be considered a good and pious Christian ; vain fear by which one shrinks from fulfilling one's obligations according to the dictates of conscience lest one should be derided ; servile complacency by which one sacrifices conscience, speaks and does evil, lest perhaps offence be given to bad men.

Indeed, shame, weak-mindedness, worldly complacency of this kind, are so opposed to virtue, that they do not allow a man either to live as a Christian, or attain to a Christian end. With the breaking of this bond, the soul immediately is constituted in the liberty of the sons of God, and becomes a participator in all the good things of Christ. Tertullian well said : *I shall be saved, if I do not grow ashamed of my Lord.* And Christ has said : *Everyone that shall confess me before men, I will confess him before my Father who is in heaven.* Matth. x. 32.

The exordium can also be deduced from the idea of liberty. And any one of the following texts would be appropriate :

Be not the bond-slaves of men. 1 Cor. vii. 23.

You, brethren have been called into liberty. Gal. v. 13.

The freedom by which Christ has made us free. Gal. iv. 31

Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 2 Cor. iii. 17

What is more beautiful, more noble, or more desirable than liberty? What, on the other hand, is more miserable or more disgraceful than slavery? The lot of the Christian is liberty, but the condition of worldlings is servitude. Truly extraordinary is it then that under pretext of liberty they break the law of God: *Let us break their bonds asunder: and let us cast away their yoke from us.* Ps. ii. 3. And again they say: *Our lips are our own: who is Lord over us?* Ps. xi. 5. And behold they take on themselves a yoke at once shameful and heavy, the yoke of sin, of passion, of human respect. By nothing is liberty more destroyed than by human respect.

We shall here speak of human respect, which yoke is so miserable and abominable that if it were realised no one in his senses would take it on him.

What therefore is human respect? and what is the remedy against it?

I. It is despicable cowardice.

II. It is ridiculous foolishness.

III. It is a hateful crime.

IV. It is, however, an evil that can be medicined to.

I. Cowardice is despicable.

He is a coward who lacks fortitude; he is all the greater coward in proportion as the enemy is weak and the yoke he imposes is hateful.

1°. But he who is a slave to human respect is a coward; he is lacking in mind; he does not dare, for instance, to fulfil the duties of his religion.

2°. Human respect is all the more disgraceful inasmuch as the enemy whom he fears is weak. Why does he fear; of whom is he afraid; why has he not the courage of his convictions? Is it that a tyrant threatens his life? No; but he

fears he might be slighted ; he fears he might be considered pious, that he might be despised. He has not the courage to ignore the titter of laughter, and that from some worthless person whom he probably despises in his heart.

3°. Human respect is all the more cowardly in proportion as the yoke he has to bear is despicable. He accepts a galling yoke. He is a slave, for he is not master of himself, but is under the dominion of another ; he is unequal to the task of doing what he wishes, but is subservient to the will and desire of another. Of slavery there are two kinds, one corporal, which means physical coercion, the other spiritual, which consists in coaction in moral acts, in conscience, and in religion. This latter slavery deprives a man of the most precious form of liberty, forsooth, the liberty of conscience. It is (1) slavery in the truest sense of the word, slavery of the most pronounced kind ; and this is the slavery which the yoke of human respect imposes. It is (2) the direst form of slavery, for it subjects its victim not only to one, but to a thousand masters. It is (3) slavery of the most ignoble kind, for it constrains him to act against his own conviction, in forcing him to desert his duty and to be ashamed of his good acts.

II. It is ridiculous folly.

1°. He casts away what is most precious. He gives up God ; he hearkens not to his conscience ; he considers not his salvation. And all for what ? For nothing ; merely on account of a little derision, and of vain and empty fear. . .

2°. He is ashamed of that which before God he should glory in—his good and upright act.

3°. He fears and trembles before a mere shadow. He is like the birds that are afraid of a scarecrow—he fears a hat on top of a stick.

4°. *There have they trembled for fear where there was no fear.* Ps. xiii. 5. It is truly the height of folly to fear such things as cannot inflict injury, and on the other hand to fall into that which should be most avoided. *What, it is asked, will they*

say of me? Who are they? The wicked. The question rather should be, *What will the good say of me?* What does my conscience say? What does God think?

III. It is a detestable crime.

1°. It is a species of apostasy and idolatry. Consider a Christian dragged before an idol at the command of a tyrant. If he has the weakness to offer incense to the statue of Jupiter, he is guilty of apostasy and idolatry. But what of the man who is the victim of human respect? The apostates in the early church denied Christ when awed by the threats of a tyrant; but you, coward of human respect, you are prepared to deny Him before every worthless creature that comes along. Perhaps you will say, I did not deny Christ. Possibly you did not deny the name of Christ; but you did deny his law, because your petty tyrant wanted you to do so. It did not please him that you should go to confession, or hear Mass, or observe the abstinence, or obey a certain commandment. . . . Who is an apostate? Is he not one who has not the courage to confess Christ in the way He has prescribed? And what has Christ prescribed? He tells us that it is not sufficient to believe: *With the heart we believe unto justice: but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* Rom. x. 10.

2°. Human respect gives God a secondary place. The man who is a prey to it offends the King, that he might please the groom. He prefers Barabbas to Christ. He imitates Herod and Pilate, both of whom were murderers from human respect.

3°. It leads to many and grievous sins; and moreover frequently keeps one in their thralldom to the very hour of death.

4°. It violates Baptism, and infringes the sacred promises made in the sacrament: *I renounce Satan and all his works and pomps.*

5°. It inflicts a grievous injury on Christ, for it implies shame of Him and of His doctrine.

6°. Wherefore great is the penalty that is threatened; it is nothing less than this—Christ on the day of judgment will be ashamed of such persons before His Father. . .

IV. Remedy.

1°. With even balance consider the fear of men and the fear of God: that is, what is to be feared from men, and what from God.

2°. Consider the glory of the name Christian, and what it is to confess it. S. Agatha, the Apostles, the Martyrs all, confirm us in this by their example. . .

3°. Consider the end of the deriders, and the confession they shall one day be forced to make: *We fools esteemed their life madness.* Wisdom v. 4.

4°. Reflect on the necessity of openly professing Christianity and the gospel: *He who is not with me is against me.* Luke, xi. 23.

5°. Consider the happiness of those who openly and sincerely profess externally what they firmly hold in their heart. They please God and they are admired by men. Who would not admire the man who stands up and says: *I fear God; but beside God, I fear nobody and nothing else.* The world may fall to pieces; its toppling ruins may strike the just and resolute man; but, though striking, they will find him undaunted still.

OTHER FORMS.

Human respect is: I. A most cruel enemy and persecutor of religion. II. It is a persecutor different to Nero, but worse than he: it is not unlike Julian the Apostate.

He who is a slave to human respect treads two paths with lame step. Cf. 3 Kings, xviii. 21. He is miserable in this life for remorse. And he will be more miserable in the next.

It is a vice :—I. It is opposed to sound reason, which condemns cowardice, hypocrisy, and foolishness. What would be thought of a general who would fear to honour his king, for fear of being derided by an insignificant soldier ; would not reason and commonsense say that he should be deposed ? II. It is opposed to God, whom it gravely offends, not by one sin only, but by many, of which it is the origin and the cause. III. It is the enemy of the soul, which it defiles and renders miserable.

As to the causes of human respect, they are :—I. Timidity or a desire to please. II. The opinion of men. III. The sneer of the mocker. A certain consideration for our fellow men is good, and even holds a place in the virtue of charity ; but it has its limits. Conscience, the law of God, and His altar must be considered. . . . *Opinion* is the queen of the world as we find it ; but this queen must if necessary be opposed and deposed by Christian *truth*. There is a judgment of men ; but above it must be set the judgment of God. Mockers are contemptible, and must be despised : enemies to others, they are in the first place enemies to themselves. They are like the fool who, taking in his hands a serpent to make it sting others, first feels the venom himself.

IGNORANCE AND CARELESSNESS.

In that day there shall be a fountain open to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.—Zachar. xiii. 1.

It is truly a happy thing to see in the world a fountain of grace perpetually flowing. How numerous are the sermons that are preached, how numberless are the divine services that are held, how many are the sacred ministers who are ever ready to administer the sacraments ! How many too are the souls who with joy approach the life-giving waters of the Lord ! But alas ! many there are who neglect to do so : many who are sick, and do not come for medicine ; many who are blind, and do not seek the light. The cause of this evil is twofold : ignorance, and negligence.

Horrible is the devastation which sin produces in the world, not only amongst unbelievers, but also amongst those who bear the name of Christ. The sight is as awful as it is sad. Sin amongst the Gentiles we could understand ; but that sin should reign in the ranks of Christians, who have all means of salvation, it is difficult to conceive. What is the explanation of this sad sight ? What is the cause of such evil ? The prophet Jeremias answers when he says : *With desolation is all the land made desolate ; because there is none that considereth in his heart.* Jerem. xii. 11. In this pronouncement of the prophet two causes are indicated : *ignorance* and *carelessness* in the matter of salvation. Take away these two causes, and the whole face of the earth, at least amongst Christians, would be changed.

Ignorance and carelessness are to the soul what wounds are to the body. And in order to heal them, it is necessary to understand, first, their nature, and, secondly, how they are to be treated. We shall then consider :

I. The evil of Ignorance and its remedy.**II. The evil of Carelessness and its cure.**

I.

THE EVIL OF IGNORANCE AND ITS REMEDY.

I. The evil of Ignorance.

How great it is can be judged from its nature, and its effects.

1°. Theologians distinguish between absence and privation. By privation they mean absence of a thing where it ought to be present, for instance blindness is more than absence of sight, it is privation. In this sense we speak of ignorance as privation, that is, absence of it where it should be present. One is ignorant of what one should know. It is as if a lawyer should be ignorant of law, a doctor of medicine, an artisan of the trade which he professes to follow.

2°. There are two kinds of ignorance: civil or economic ignorance, that is ignorance in industrial or other matters relating to life, and religious ignorance. The former we have in part already explained. As to the latter it is present when one is not versed in Christian doctrine, when one does not know what it is to live as a Christian, or attain to one's destined place in heaven. Bad is the former; but much worse is the latter.

3°. Let us take an example. Let us, if possible, suppose a nobleman who does not know of his title to nobility, nor the extent of his fortune or possessions, nor the requirements of his state in life—what would the world think of him, how would it regard him? Such ignorance could be accounted for only on one hypothesis—lack of sanity. And yet what is it to that of a man who does not know, or, knowing, forgets, that he is a Christian, a son of God, and heir to his kingdom; who forgets his nobility, and is oblivious of the treasures that await him? Why, a comparison between the two is nothing less than ridiculous.

4°. And how many there are who must be placed in this latter category! How many there are who live in sin, never

think of the sacraments, and live as heathens! And what is the explanation of all this but ignorance?—ignorance as to what sin is, what damnation means. Truly, ignorance is the prolific mother—or we should say rather the dam—of vice and deepest misery. In particular is this true of unbelief, whose unfailing characteristic is to blaspheme what it does not know. On the other hand, faith springs from knowledge. This follows from Christ's commission, *Teach all nations*, as also from the words of St. Paul, *Faith cometh by hearing*. Rom. x. 17.

5°. Perhaps some one may object and say that *ignorance excuses*, and St. Paul (1 Tim. i. 13, in speaking of himself as a former persecutor of the Church) says: *I did it ignorantly in unbelief*. Yes, there is an ignorance which excuses; but likewise there is that which is culpable. Those who were born amongst the gentiles, in the time of Christ, might perhaps say, *I did not know*. But what plea can be advanced in favour of those who deliberately shut their eyes against the noonday light of the Church? What excuse can they offer? Inasmuch as they are unwilling to learn, unwilling to listen to sermons, unwilling to read a pious book, are they not responsible for their ignorance? Truly by desolation is the whole land made desolate. To those to whom the exhortation applies, I say *wake up*; take to heart the words of the Psalmist, *Embrace discipline* (in your case the discipline of mind) *lest at any time the Lord be angry*. Ps. ii. 12.

II. What is the Remedy?

It is that each one, as becomes a Christian, should apply himself to the study of his religion; which study is at once *noble, easy, and pleasing*.

1°. *It is noble*. What can be found grander or nobler than knowledge? How much more is this true, if the knowledge be that of profound truths, and, in addition, truths which touch us most closely? How aptly the Psalmist expresses this when he says: *The words of the Lord are pure words, as silver tried by the fire, purged from the earth, refined seven times*. And again: *The commandment of the Lord is*

lightsome, enlightening the eyes. Ps. xi. xviii. Do we realize what it is to be able to learn from the mouth of God himself, in the person of His minister? *He that heareth you, heareth me.* Luke x. 16. And again, in the words of Christ Himself, quoting the prophets: *And they shall all be taught of God.* John vi. 45.

2°. *It is easy.*

It is sufficient to sanctify the Lord's day, to hear the word of God, and religious instruction, and to read some pious book. *Come ye to him and be enlightened.* Ps. xxxiii. 6.

3°. *It is pleasing.*

The knowledge of truth pure and undefiled, which is in Christ, the light of the world, communicates to the soul light, serenity, and peace. *Come, children, hearken to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord. Who is the man that desireth life: who loveth to see good days?* Ps. xxxiii.

4°. In this connection I wish to refer to the reward that awaits those who not only hear the word themselves, but do their best to influence and teach others: *They that instruct many to justice shall shine as stars for all eternity.* Dan. xii. 13

II.

THE EVIL OF CARELESSNESS AND ITS REMEDY.

I. The evil of carelessness.

1°. Carelessness is the sister of ignorance, and as such we shall speak of it. There are two kinds of carelessness: carelessness in temporal matters, and carelessness in the affairs of salvation. The former is bad; but the latter is much worse.

2°. Carelessness in temporal affairs.

Consider the careless husbandman or merchant. See the field of the one; and the storehouse of the other. What waste and weeds in the former; what confusion, and squalor, and

loss and ruin in the latter! The character of each is written there. Soon, however, they will probably find themselves, the farmer without his field, and the merchant without his store.

3°. But what is this to carelessness in the matter of salvation? What is to be thought of the man who, placed in this world for the sole purpose of working out his salvation, nevertheless, scarcely ever gives it a thought; but, on the contrary, is preoccupied with temporal matters? As a Christian he is bound to fulfil the duties of his state, to avoid sin, to look to the good of his soul above all things else, *seek first the kingdom of God*; and yet he does none of these; on the contrary, he prays badly, or perhaps not at all, he shuns the sacraments, he sticks fast in sin. Alas! what an awful state of soul! In the field of his heart, where the flowers of virtue should blow, what weeds of vice do abound! What thought has he of the spiritual trading which the Master demanded of each one, when He said, *Trade till I come*? Luke xix. 13.

4°. *Trade till I come*: He probably does so in regard to temporal affairs, but as to his soul—O sad carelessness!

5°. Do you not see, O brother in Christ, whither such negligence is leading you, and not you alone, but, through you, perhaps, your family, and those subject to you? Ruin, irreparable ruin. In God's name, while occasion serves, and time is yours, apply the remedy.

II. Remedy for Carelessness.

1°. It is a simple one: think first of your salvation, and, having done that, think as you like about temporal affairs: *Seek first the kingdom of God and His glory, and all these things shall be added unto you*. Let there be a fixed time consecrated to daily prayer, consecrated to sanctifying the Lord's day, consecrated to the frequentation of the sacraments.

2°. Look carefully to all things that pertain to your salvation, even to those that may appear small: *He that is faithful*

in that which is least, is faithful also in that which is greater.
Luke xvi. 10.

37. Exercise vigilance in your home, in dealing with your children, and those under you, If you do so, not only will you reap happiness in the future, but you will have consolation even in this life.

THE MUTUAL OBLIGATIONS OF CHILDREN AND PARENTS.

Honour thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest be longlived upon the land which the Lord thy God will give you.—Exod. xx. 12.

The commandments as given to Moses were inscribed on two tables, one set relating to God, the other to our neighbour. And we should not lose sight of the significance of the fact, that the first commandment on the second table deals with the obligation of children towards their parents ; to the fulfilment of which a special reward is attached. And this is just what we should expect in accordance with right reason, for it is in a manner the basis and foundation of all the others ; which, if fulfilled, so will the others be ; if neglected, the others, we may presume, will be neglected too.

The commandment refers both to children and to parents : to children, directly, as is evident from the words ; to parents, indirectly, because, inasmuch as children are bound to honour parents, so, on the other hand, parents are bound to act in a manner that will be calculated to elicit honour from their children.

We shall treat first of children ; secondly, of parents ; and in the third place of the obligation they both have in common, when there is question of a vocation or call to a particular state in life.

I.

THE OBLIGATIONS OF CHILDREN.

The great duty of filial piety comprises three things : *Love, reverence, and obedience.* We shall consider each of these separately.

FIRST PART : FILIAL LOVE.

I. Why should children love their parents ?

II What kind of love should they bear them ?

III. What of the sins that are committed ?

I. Why should children love their parents ?

1°. That children should love their parents is a duty so self-evident that the asking of the question would appear idle were it not unfortunately too true that many are so inhuman as to refuse to render this love. . . .

2°. Reason itself, apart from revelation, teaches that those related to us in blood, as also benefactors, and those that love us, should be loved in return. Those are nature's titles to love. And in whom are these titles more fully fulfilled than in parents ? . . . Let us imagine the following case. Suppose you went into a strange country, and while famishing with hunger, and destitute of all things, two persons came to you, and supplied all your wants, what would be thought of you if you did not love and respect them ? But this, and much more, your parents have done for you ; they did it from your tenderest years, and they are doing it still. The Canaan woman is a case in point. She came to Christ, and cried out : *Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David : my daughter is*

grievously troubled by a devil. Matth. xv. 22 ; see also Gen. xxxvii. 33, Kings xix. 4. She spoke as if she herself was troubled ; and such is the feeling of every true mother. Reflect, therefore, O children, and ask yourselves whether those who regard you thus are not deserving of love and respect.

3°. The Holy Spirit teaches it too ; speaking through the mouth of Tobias iv. 3, he says : *Thou shalt honour thy mother all the days of her life : for thou must be mindful what and how great perils she has suffered for thee in her womb.* And again : *Honour thy father and forget not the groanings of thy mother : remember thou hadst not been born but through them : and make a return to them as they have done for thee.* Eccli. vii. 29.

4°. Love is the root from which reverence and obedience spring ; and if love be absent, we shall look for them in vain. Love is the root ; duty the trunk ; reverence and obedience the branches.

II. What kind should this love be ?

1°. As is the love of parents towards children, so should the love of children be towards parents ; that is, a mutual love ; and as such it should have three characteristics—it should be *true*, that is, from the heart, and not from the lips only ; it should be *efficacious*, that is, it should manifest itself not in words only, but in act and kindness ; it should be *constant*, that is, such love as will survive the age of infancy and youth, and extend even to old age. Children are bound, in case of the helplessness or feebleness of parents, to render back the debt of kindness and care that they themselves received in infancy. . .

III. Now as to the sins that are committed.

1°. He who forgetting filial love grieves and afflicts his parents is *not worthy* (in the words of the prodigal) *to be called a son.* Luke xv. 21.

2°. Unworthy of the name is he who embitters the life of his parents ; who bears aversion towards them ; or who

manifests habitual sourness of temper. Unworthy is he who externally and for the sake of appearance only, is benevolent, while internally, in his heart, he looks forward to the day when their eyes will be closed in death. Unworthy is he who does not carry out their dying wishes ; who forgets them after death, and takes no care to pray for their souls. . . .

3°. Unworthy of the name is he who abandons his parents when they are poor, or old, or infirm. O fathers and mothers, how much you are to be pitied ; you who took so much care to educate your children, and to raise them to an honourable state in life, now in your old age you are practically childless, and you must feel the bitterness of the cry of Jacob when he exclaimed : *You have made me to be without children.* Gen. xlii. 36.

4°. *And what excuses are usually offered ?*

The following are examples : I am not bound to do any more than my brothers and sisters ; I have my own family to look to ; where can I find the means, as I am not well off ? How easy it is to find an excuse ! Where love is absent excuses spring up as spontaneously as mushrooms ; but true love brushes them aside as vain and trifling. If charity divides its loaf with the poor stranger, what should not filial love do ? Away with such excuses, and at least be honest with yourself and admit that you are lacking in filial love. . . .

5°. How sinful and how horrible in the eyes of God that he who should be the consolation, the joy, and the support of his parents, should, on the contrary, be an affliction and a torment to them ! In the book of Ecclesiasticus we read : *Of what an evil fame is he that forsaketh his father : and he is cursed of God that angereth his mother.* iii. 18.

6°. The voice of nature and the voice of God combine in saying : *Honour thy father and thy mother.* Happy is he who hearkens to that voice ; consolation and honour and benediction will be his share. But he who heeds not that voice is like to the serpent which, as the story has it, struck its fangs into the breast of the man who, finding it frozen, nursed it back to life. An ungrateful child is a human serpent ; he is despised by men ; and the anger of God awaits him.

SECOND PART : FILIAL REVERENCE.

I. Why should reverence be paid to parents ?

II. What kind of reverence is due to them ?

III. What of the sins against reverence ?

I. Why should reverence be paid to parents ?

1°. Because nature herself has stamped this obligation with indelible and permanent mark on the mind of all. Even amongst the gentiles and barbarians the name of parent is sacred.

2°. To the Christian the voice of nature is re-inforced by the voice of God : *Honour thy father and thy mother.* Exod. xx. 12. And St. Paul, in his epistle to the Ephesians, vi. 2, calls it, *The first commandment with a promise.*

3°. To this is added the example of Christ : *And he was subject to them.* Luke, ii. 51.

4°. Parents are appointed by God as leaders and teachers for their children, and as such they in a manner hold for them the place of God.

II. What kind of reverence is due to them ?

1°. In the first place it should be founded on faith : *He that heareth you, heareth me.* Luke, x. 16.

2°. *Honour thy father, in work and word, and all patience, that a blessing may come upon thee from him, and his blessing may remain in the latter end.* Eccli. iii. 9, 10.

(1) Parents must be honoured in *work*, that is, by external signs of reverence. Thus Joseph, when receiving his father Jacob in Egypt, honoured him.

(2) In *word*, that is, we should speak to them with reverence, and, in speaking of them before others, we should preserve the same reverence.

(3) They should be honoured by *silence*, that is, we should not interrupt them while they speak to, or admonish us, and never, under any circumstances, contradict them.

(4) *In patience*, that is, by bearing their defects and weaknesses. If a parent happens to be poor, or an invalid, or, perhaps, not free from vice, take care that you do not on that account harbour any ill feeling or show irreverence. *Son, support the old age of thy father . . . and despise him not when thou art in thy strength.* Eccli. x. 14, 15. Be silent and pray. Your parents, whatever they may be, never cease to be your parents, and, therefore, must always be honoured by you. . .

III. Now as to the sins against reverence.

1°. Sins against filial reverence are most disgraceful, particularly if they go so far that parents have reason to say, *I have brought up children and exalted them ; but they have despised me.* Isai. i. 2.

2°. And who are they of whom this can be said ? They are

(1) Those who look upon the corrections of their parents as, to use their own words, the dotage of old age.

(2) Those who manifest bitterness for a correction or admonition that may perhaps be a little sharp ; who complain of such correction in the presence of others.

(3) Those who are ashamed to acknowledge their parents, because they happen to be rather poor.

3°. What must be said of those who support indeed their parents in their old age, but do so with unwilling hand, and make them eat the bread of bitterness ? . . .

4°. But, above all, what must be said—of the man I cannot say ; of the brute I cannot say, as it would be a calumny on the brutes—of the *monster* who does not dread to raise a sacrilegious threatening hand against his parents ? If he is cursed who turns a savage eye on his father, what, what of him who, in the all seeing sight of God, lifts his hand and strikes him !

THIRD PART : FILIAL OBEDIENCE.

I. Why should obedience be rendered to parents ?

II. What should that obedience be ?

III. What of the sins against it ?

I. Why should parents be obeyed ?

1°. Because reason teaches and demands it. During the years of infancy man has need of a guiding hand ; and that hand is offered—kind, benevolent, expert, the best of all, the hand of the parent. Without it, to what dangers of body and soul would children be exposed ! What if they were left to themselves ! Would they not be like to sailors without a rudder in a storm ? or to one rushing blindfolded towards an abyss ? This being so, reason teaches that the parents' leading must be followed ; and this can be done only through filial obedience.

2°. Faith teaches the same both directly and indirectly. Let us take the latter first. It teaches it, I say, indirectly : yes, inasmuch as it is laid down that parents are invested with authority, and burdened with obligation, in regard to their children : *And you fathers . . . bring them up (your children) in the discipline and correction of the Lord.* Ephes. vi. 4. From this it follows that as parents are appointed by God to educate their children, so children on their part are bound to obey their parents.

3°. Faith also teaches it by express mandate : *Children, obey your parents in all things : for this is well pleasing to the Lord.* Col. iii. 20. A few words by way of explanation. It is said :—(1) *in all things* ; therefore even in things that are troublesome and unpleasant. There is only one exception, and that is, if parents—which God forbid !—should command a something that was opposed to the law of God or his church, such as, to lie, to steal, to read bad books, to frequent

dangerous places. In such case, the rule is, as laid down by St. Peter, *We ought to obey God rather than man.* Acts, v. 29. And even so, the refusal, while steadfast, should be conveyed with reverence ; and thus perhaps the miserable parents may be aroused to a sense of duty.

(2) *Well pleasing in the Lord* : here we have the motive. You should not seek whether it be pleasing to you ; it is sufficient that it is commanded. By that very fact it becomes pleasing to God, and as such should be done in all love and diligence.

4°. Because blessing and reward will crown our obedience. *An obedient man shall speak of victory.* Prov. xxi. 28 ; and again : *Obedience is better than sacrifices: and to hearken rather than to offer the fat of rams.* 1 Kings, xv. 22.

5°. Finally, we have the example of Christ and the Saints. The great example of obedience is that of our Blessed Lord : *Father, . . not my will, but thine be done.* Luke xxii. 42.

II. What kind should obedience be ?

It should be perfect after the example of Christ ; which means that it should be full, prompt, strong, humble, freely given, constant, without excuses, and resting on faith as its foundation : *Not serving to the eye . . but as the servants of Christ.* Ephes. vi. 5, 6.

III. What of the sins against obedience ?

1°. I do not speak of those unworthy sons who are so impious as to resist a parent to the face, saying : *I will not obey you.* Let such beware lest the punishment of the blasphemers be meted out to them. . . .

2°. There are children who obey only in those things which they themselves are disposed to do ; but who, when anything not to their liking is ordered, murmur and seek excuses.

3°. There are others who when reprimanded immediately flare up, and give way to anger. This is named indocility, and is, of course, opposed to obedience

4°. Again, there are those who, as soon as they get on a little in years, scorn any longer to seek or listen to the prudent advice of their parents : for example, when there is question of their state in life ; and thus frequently through their own rashness plunge themselves into misery. How prudent is the advice of the Preacher ! *Children, hear the judgment of your father, and so do that you may be saved.* Eccli. iii. 2.

5°. Sins of this kind are often lightly mentioned in the tribunal of penance : *I did not obey my parents*, they say, without any further mention as to whether it was in grave matter, although sometimes the matter is of the gravest import. Under the Old Dispensation, disobedience in a matter of grave importance was looked upon as a crime punishable by death : *If a man have a stubborn and unruly son, who will not hear the commandments of his father or mother, and, being corrected, slighteth obedience . . . the people of the city shall stone him.* Deuter. xxi. 18, 21.

6°. Woe to you then disobedient sons ! You call down on your head the malediction of God. We have many examples of this : There is Absalom ; there is the prodigal son ; there are the many who to-day are in the prisons, and the hospitals ; not to speak of the numberless instances of wretched family life. And what is the cause, what is the root, of so much misery, and discord ? Surely it is not far to seek. . .

Perhaps some one may say : what after all does it matter that such and such should be forbidden by parents ? Or another may say : I do not sin so deeply as this in my acts of disobedience. This is a false and self-deceiving notion. Seeing that both temporal and eternal happiness are at stake, should not our rule of conduct be the following ? I will obey in all things, for such is the will of God ; I will obey perfectly, for such is the example of Christ, who for us became obedient to death, even to the death of the cross.

II.

DUTY OF PARENTS.

The great and responsible office of Christian parents towards their children can be reduced to two main heads : *love*, and *education*.

By education I do not mean mere book learning—that will come in too as a branch of it—but I mean the development of the faculties of the mind, and the powers of the body : I mean, in other words, as the name implies, the drawing out or developing of the child into the perfect man. Education in this sense is both *corporal* and *moral*. The latter is the more important, and contains four parts : *teaching of knowledge, vigilance, correction and punishment, example*. The duty of parentage resolves itself into seven distinct parts, each of which we will consider ; namely :

I. The love of parents for their children.

II. Education in general.

III. Instruction in particular.

IV. Watchfulness.

V. Correction.

VI. Example.

VII. Corporal education.

FIRST PART : THE LOVE OF PARENTS FOR THEIR CHILDREN.

I. What kind should this love be ?

II. What are the sins against it ?

I. What kind should the love be ?

1°. We do not ask if parents should love their children, for nature herself deeply impresses parental love. And she impresses it not only on human beings, but even on the irrational animals. When there is a question of its young, the timid hen becomes brave ; and the tigress forgets its ferocity. In Sacred Scripture parental love is scarcely commanded ; it is rather taken for granted : *Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb.* Isai. xlix. 15 ; and the famous judgment of Solomon was based on the strength of maternal love : *Give the living child to this woman, and let it not be killed, for she is the mother thereof.* 3 Kings, iii. 27.

2°. It may be asked what kind should parental love be ?

(1) It should be, in the first place, in accord with reason : sincere, efficacious—that is, finding expression in act ; it should be free from unjust preference or discrimination—that is, not putting one child above another ; it should aim at the true and real good of the children ; it should not be what is called soft love, nor love founded on any excellence of external qualities ; the children should be loved for their soul rather than for the body, and should be loved because they are your children.

(2) The love should be *Christian*, that is, founded on faith. Parents should look upon their children as precious gifts given them by God. They should, in a manner, look upon their children as the Church regards the deposit of faith—to be guarded and preserved pure and undefiled. O parents, do try to realize the meaning of this, that your child, regenerated by Baptism, is an adopted child of God. . . .

(3) Finally, the love should be *true*, not a false, worldly love ; for the latter, in view of eternal salvation, would be more akin to hatred than to love. . . .

II. What are the sins against love ?

1°. Parents sin, and sin grievously, who hate their children on account of corporal or mental defects ; or because they are the offspring of a former marriage. This is a horrible and unnatural sin, such as we should look for only amongst barbarians ; certainly not amongst Christians. Should not the infirmities of the little ones rather be a reason for treating them with additional kindness ? In this you should follow the example of the eternal Father, who, while hating vice, still loves the sinner as his child. . . .

2°. And if children are wayward and erring, how unnatural for parents to curse them ! Pray rather that the malediction of God may be averted from them, ungrateful though they may be. . . .

3°. Parents sin who, carried away by anger, or bad temper, severely punish their children. . . .

4°. Likewise if they show different feelings of love towards them, by indulging in preference, making an idol of one, and scarcely tolerating another ; seeing nothing good in one, and nothing bad in another, although that other may be really vicious. This injustice and blindness of parents is usually the beginning of discord amongst brothers, and not less it is the origin of dislike and all manner of bitterness towards parents. . . .

5°. Finally, they err, if they love their children with too great affection, or with a love that is merely carnal and worldly. . . .

SECOND PART : THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN.

The duties of parents are manifold and grave, but they can be all reduced to one general head—the proper education of their children. This obligation was imposed by God Himself ; this is their mission most sacred ; this is their apostleship. Apostleship I call it, for such was given to parents in their own sphere—the family circle—not less than to Paul amongst the Gentiles, who said of himself, *Woe unto me if I preach not the gospel.* 1 Cor. ix. 16. From the hand of God, O parents, you have received your children, that you may educate them to a knowledge of the end for which He has created them. Whoever neglects this duty shall not be saved ; but they who fulfil it in Christian spirit may be regarded in a manner as satisfying the entire law, and thus shall gain salvation. It is in this sense S. Paul speaks when he says of the mother, *She shall be saved through child-bearing.* 1 Tim. ii. 15.

This subject of education being so important, we shall consider it under three heads :

I. What is education ?**II. Why is it necessary ?****III. What should it be ?****I. What is education ?**

1°. It is the means by which children are led to the state of perfect Christian manhood ; by which they are put on the way which leads to the goal for which God destined them.

2°. There are various kinds of education : education of the body, and education of the mind ; civil education and religious education ; education that is merely human and literary, and religious education ; there is good, and there is evil education.

3°. Good, true education, the only form worthy of the name, is that which fits one to lead a good, moral, Christian life on earth, and thus to be happy for eternity. Evil education may indeed make a man learned and rich in this life ; but it will at the same time leave him with his vices full-blown, and as such qualified for citizenship in the place where fallen angels dwell.

II. Why is it necessary ?

1°. Because both the natural and divine law demand it ; because the good of society, the happiness of children, nay the happiness of the parents themselves, depend on it.

2°. Nature aims at thoroughness and perfection in her works. We see this even in the vegetable world. In the beginning God said, Gen. i. 11 : *Let the earth bring forth the green herb, and such as may seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after its kind.* By which words the Creator granted fecundity to the earth, not only that it should bring forth the plant, but that it should nourish it even to the bearing of its proper fruit, which is its perfection. Similarly, but for a much greater reason, is this true of the human race. What earth is to the plant, that education is to man—the means by which he can grow in virtue, which is the proper fruit and perfection of human nature. . . .

3°. Nature teaches parents to love their children, and provide for them what is their proper good. But without true education, this latter cannot be done ; neither can their children have happiness in this life, and their chances of it will be more than doubtful in the next.

4°. What we have already stated is the dictate of the natural law ; and this is reinforced by positive divine law, in other words by revelation : *And you fathers . . . bring them up (your children) in the discipline and correction of the Lord.* Ephes. vi. 4.

5°. Faith sheds its light on the subject, and in that light we can see children as a trust given by God to parents, corresponding, in a manner, to the deposit of truth which He entrusts to His Church. In Baptism Almighty God adopts

the child and says of it : *This is my son*. Accordingly, O parents, this child—God's more than yours—guard and educate, that it may become worthy of its Father and its celestial home. The priest gives you back your children from the baptismal font as angels, how many parents, alas ! transform them into devils ! . . .

6°. In regard to children there is no middle course : unless you educate them for God and heaven, you are preparing them for the devil and hell. And what a terrible account must be rendered to God in regard to this duty ! We can well imagine God addressing parents in the words which He spoke through the mouth of the prophet Ezechiel, iii. 18 : *I will require their blood at thy hands*. S. Bernard in speaking of such persons calls them not parents but murderers—*Non parentes, sed peremptores, quorum consolatio mors filii est*. Epist. cxi.

7°. On the education of youth rests the condition of society and the chief hope of the Church. Hence the love and solicitude that our Blessed Lord had for children (cf. Matth. xviii. 5, and following ; Mark, x. 14, and following). And, on the other hand, we can understand the strenuous efforts of Satan and his agents to poison the fountains of education. . . .

8°. On education likewise depends happiness in this life, and happiness in the next. For what follows from a good education ? What from an evil one ? The happiness of man consists principally in stainless morals, in holy living, without which what can riches avail ? But such a life is chiefly dependent on a good education. Youth is as a twig that can be bent to any shape ; it is like unto wax on which an image is stamped ; and education will determine whether the image is to be that of angel or devil. Do you doubt it ? Then I appeal to experience. Whence the difference between children of different families ; some pious, obedient, and industrious ; others idle and irreverent ? Sacred Scripture declares the same : *A young man according to his way, even when he is old he will not depart from it*. Prov. xxii. 6. And the common sense of mankind ratifies it. If a young man is remarkable

for probity of life, or notorious for malice, the first question likely to be asked is, whose son is he? In fact the saying has now passed into a proverb, as is the parent so will be the child. . . .

9°. From education, therefore, as unerringly as plant from seed, will follow future lot, whether of salvation or perdition. And it requires no stretch of imagination to picture a son on judgment day accusing a parent and saying: You corrupted me by your bad example; when I sinned, you did not correct me; if I but broke a pane of glass you stormed and raged, but when I blasphemed the name of God, you were silent; you saw to it that I worked during the week, but you took little care that I should sanctify the Lord's day, and avoid evil company. Thus on the last day, and especially in hell, will son cry out against his father, and daughter against her mother. You prepared me for hell, they will say; if you cared not to educate me for heaven, then why did you give me life? Better for me if I had never been born. . . . Parents I ask you to reflect and ask yourselves, whether you are consecrating your children to God, or to the devil. . . .

10°. How dire will be the remorse and how terrible the judgment of bad parents! On the other hand, how happy, when they come to die, will those parents be whose conscience can say, I have done my duty! To them, resplendent with glory on the last day, their children, saved through their care, will turn and say to the whole world: This is my father, this is my mother. . . .

11°. We have already seen that on education depends the happiness of children; on it likewise depends the happiness of parents, both (A) *temporal* and (B) *eternal*. A few words as to each.

(A) *Temporal happiness:*

(1). Great is the joy, and sweet the consolation of soul that must come to parents when they see around them children who regard them with obedience, reverence, and love. Then truly can they be said to be happy. We read in the Book of Proverbs, x. 1: *A wise son maketh the father glad; but a foolish son is the sorrow of his mother.* And in Ecclesiasticus xvi. 1:

Rejoice not in ungodly children . . . neither be delighted in them, if the fear of God is not with them. But when, we may ask, is this verified in children ; is it not when on their hearts is impressed the commandment, *Honour thy father and thy mother* ? And how but by true Christian education is this lesson inscribed there ? . . .

(2). How pleasing it must be to a father on seeing a good son to be able to say within himself, I am his father ! On the contrary, how bitter for him, when his conscience, upbraiding, says : *Behold your dissolute son, behold your unworthy daughter, principally through you they are what they are !* . . .

(3). There are parents, alas how many ! who have reason to cry out : *I had hoped that my children would be a consolation to me, and behold they are the affliction of my old age ! How have I deserved this ?* Examine and see if you have not yourself sown the seed of this bitterness. *What things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap*, Gal. vi. 8, is particularly true in regard to children. *Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles.* Matth. vii. 16. Perhaps you will find that you yourself are responsible for the thorns and the thistles. . . .

(B) On the education of their children also depends the eternal happiness of parents.

(1). If a parent in this regard has done his duty well, he can say, *it is finished.* . . . *Lord, thou didst deliver to me five talents, behold I have gained other five over and above.* Matth. xxv. 20. And also, in the words of Christ to His Eternal Father, they can say : *Holy Father, . . . those whom thou gavest me have I kept ; and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition.* John xvii. 11, 12. And they shall have praise and reward as *the faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath appointed over his family.* Matth. xxiv. 45.

(2). On the other hand, what words can describe the wrath of Him who so denounced the scandal-giver, when He comes to seek the children whom He redeemed and adopted, and finds them murdered spiritually, and by those whom He gave them as guardians !

(3). What reply can parents make to the Eternal Father when He says to them : I have made you sharers in my

paternal authority, that you might educate those and make them worthy to be my children ; but instead of sons of God, you have made them children of the devil ? How will they answer the Son ? How the Holy Ghost ? What reply can they make to their guardian angels ? . . .

Considering all this we realize that there is alas ! only too much foundation for the opinion of St. Isidore : *Many parents will be damned, because through their fault their children are damned.* . . .

III. What should the education be ?

1°. Not of the kind that is given by many who educate their children solely for the purpose that they may be strong in body, well informed in mind, with an appreciation of art, and capable of occupying an honourable position in the world. All this is excellent in its way. But is there nothing more ? Have they not immortal souls ? Is this earth to be their abode always ? Have no misgivings on the point, but rest assured, that parents who educate their children in this way, forgetting heaven, become the slayers of their souls. . . .

2°. To this same class, needless to say, belong all those who have in mind one sole aim, that their children may please the world. . . .

3°. Also those who look only to the amassing of riches. . . .

4°. Some parents are found who almost directly, we might say, set about corrupting their children by sending them to bad or dangerous or suspected schools. Such schools are the very portals of hell. And yet Catholic parents will sometimes send their children there, either on the flimsy pretext that they could not get a sufficiently good education elsewhere, or, perhaps, because such schools are considered fashionable. The devil makes ample use of the social net, and he has caught many in its meshes. . . .

5°. Again there are those parents who, while not neglecting altogether internal, moral, Christian education, think they are doing well enough if they give it a secondary place, and look principally to what we might call external, temporal, and worldly education. . . .

6°. Not thus will act the true Christian parent, but he will give such an education as nature and faith demand ; one which, while not neglecting the temporal, will embrace also the spiritual ; an education which will be broad-based on the four foundations, or constitutives, of *Instruction*, *Watchfulness*, *Correction*, and *Example*. Of each of these we shall treat in turn.

THIRD PART : INSTRUCTION.

I. What kind should it be ?

II. Sins against this obligation.

I. What kind should instruction be ?

1°. It should be Christian ; that is, such as will teach children a knowledge of salvation, how to live and die well. This knowledge the children have certainly a right to receive. But on whom devolves the obligation of teaching them ? Clearly on the parents. Nature says so, and Sacred Scripture enforces nature's voice : *Hast thou children ? Instruct them, and bow down their neck from their childhood.* Eccli. vii. 25.

2°. Children should be sent to good schools. But their Christian education should begin before that ; it should begin in the home. In the Book of Proverbs we read of the obligation on the part of children to heed their parents ; but this same implies an obligation on the part of parents to teach them : *My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother.* i. 8.

3°. Coming to practice and detail, we ask in what does this teaching consist? It should follow the same order as the simple teaching of corporal necessities. Parents teach their children to eat and walk. Simple necessities to be sure, but still the children must be taught them. In like manner they should be taught the sign of the cross, their morning and night prayers, the fundamental doctrines of the faith, what they should do and avoid, conformably of course to their tender years. .

4°. The great way of teaching is for parents to lead a Christian life, and if so, they will have little difficulty in getting their children to do the same. At the same time they can, by little tact, make use of occasions as they occur. For instance, if the child of some one known to them should die, the parents could avail of it to tell their children of the future life. Also if they hear the church bell ringing, they could tell them what it means. If the image of a saint be shown them, they could impress a useful lesson on the child's mind. The child will naturally want to know who the priest is, and the parents can avail of their infant curiosity to tell them whom he represents. If they meet a poor person, an appropriate lesson can be taught as to charity, and Christ's love for the poor. Even the harvest time and the flowers can be made object lessons. Also when a child returns from church or catechism or school it should be interrogated as to what has been learned, and a reward in the way of praise or otherwise will be found to be helpful. . .

Happy is the home that is a school of Christian life; but alas! only too often it happens that the so-called Christian home, so far from being such a school, is one of worldliness, if not of positive vice. . .

II. Sins in regard to this duty.

1°. Those parents are guilty of sin who neglect to give their children moral and Christian instruction. Of the children of such parents it is commonly said, they know everything except what relates to faith and morals.

2°. Also such parents as send their children, no matter what the pretext, to bad or dangerous schools.

3°. Likewise those who bring them to theatres, or other dangerous places with the aim (bless the mark!) of teaching them to know the world . . .

4°. Those who permit them to read bad or suggestive books, or to associate with companions who are not strangers to vice. . .

5°. Above all those who (a rare case to be sure, but not altogether unknown) openly teach their children to lie, to steal, to speak ill of others, to blaspheme. . .

6°. Those who less openly, but none the less truly, co-operate in banishing the Christian spirit from their children's minds, by teaching them that the one great source of happiness consists in amassing a goodly fortune, in acquiring a lucrative position, in pride and worldly splendour. . .

All those sins must be avoided ; a good Christian education must be given, and must be looked upon as a very grave paternal duty. With a view to this it will be helpful and encouraging to keep the reward in mind : *They that instruct many to justice shall shine as stars for all eternity.* Daniel xii. 3.

FOURTH PART: THE VIGILANCE OF PARENTS.

I. Is vigilance necessary, and what kind is required ?

II. What are the contrary defects ?

I. Is vigilance necessary, and what kind is required ?

1°. The Christian home is in a manner a school, in which parents should not only teach, but also see that their teaching

and admonitions are carried out. If vigilance is lacking, children act as pupils do when the master is absent. Nor is it sufficient to entrust this duty to the grown up members of the family, or to domestics; the parents should see to it with their own eyes. . . .

2°. A telling example of the necessity of this is supplied us by the Israelites, who, in the absence of Moses, said to Aaron: *Make us gods.* Exod. xxxii. 1. For a much greater reason, children left to themselves, or permitted to mix with undesirable companions, are likely to do not only foolish, but sinful things. The children are the Israelites; the father the Moses of the family. . . .

3°. Let the parents' eye be ever open and watchful; they should always know where their children are, and what they are doing. It is a mistake, however, to keep children inactive; let them provide some means by which they can be occupied in something good or innocent. Never permit them to associate with any except good companions. They should exercise discretion and circumspection in selecting domestics, also, when possible, teachers; nor should they be in the dark as to how these act towards their children. And, so far as is possible, they should know the inclinations of their children, as also what they say and do. . . .

II. The contrary defects.

1°. Many while they are anxious day and night about many things, show no care in regard to their children. Ever interesting themselves in the affairs of others, they are strangely ignorant as to what takes place in their own household. . . .

2°. Some there are who scarcely ever see their children except at table, permitting them to wander when, where, and as long as they wish, with never a thought of the dangers and allurements that surround them.

3°. Parents are troubled and solicitous about many things; but the great and necessary business, the safe-

guarding of the trust imposed on them, the care of their children—they are in peaceful oblivion in regard to it. And there follows of course the necessary consequence—the ruin of those children. . . .

4°. A word of warning to those parents who fancy they have done their duty if they keep their children at home, but fail to notice the influence of domestics. Parents, be prudent, and if you hear unbecoming words spoken by your children, it will not be hard to guess whence they came. Be watchful and see that they do not imbibe poison within the very walls of your own home. . . .

5°. Some give their daughters too much liberty in meeting young men. Others imprudently permit their sons to go to places from which they return changed for the worse, and sometimes vitiated beyond remedy. . . .

6°. Finally, we must not omit to make a reference to those—though it is impossible to properly characterize their conduct—who themselves lead their children into danger; or who, in presence of their children, say and do things that are a scandal to their young feet.

I exhort you, therefore, O parents, to guard jealously as the apple of your eye the treasure, the sacred trust, which Almighty God has confided to you. Protect your children from the dangers that surround them, that you may be able to render back to God pure and intact the sacred charge He has given you. And, doing so, you shall merit to hear from Him those words: *Well done thou good and faithful servant.* . . .

FIFTH PART: THE CORRECTION OF CHILDREN.

I. What is correction ; and is it necessary ?

II. What kind is called for ?

III. What are the faults in this regard ?

I. What is correction ; and is it necessary ?

1°. By correction delinquent children are restrained. It may consist in admonition, or threats, or in punishment of some kind ; which punishment may be either positively inflicted, or may take the form of privation, or may be such as will make them feel the ignominy of their position. . . .

2°. *It is necessary.*—This is manifest from reason itself. As to education—we refer of course to moral education—it should be efficacious, that is, such as will lead children to avoid evil, and do good. But it is obvious that, if children fail to avoid the one and do the other of their own accord, they should be constrained thereto. Nature from youth is prone to evil, and this tendency should be offset by the restraining hand of discipline. Also youth is as it were a spring time, when, with the wheat of virtue, the seed of cockle, such as lying, anger, and disobedience, becomes mixed, and unless it be sifted before it takes root, it will grow and stifle the wheat. And even before the age of which we speak is reached, from the very cradle, obstinate self-will shows itself. This should be suppressed at once, for in the bending or suppressing of one's will consists the essence of moral training. But in children, as is obvious, this can be done only by one or other of the forms of correction to which we have referred. . . .

3°. *It is obligatory on parents.*—This follows from what has been already said. We have seen that correction is necessary. But if parents do not correct their children, then who is to do so ? . . .

4°. *This is the teaching of Sacred Scripture. He that spareth the rod hateth his son. Prov. xiii. 24. Bow down his neck while he is young, and beat his sides while he is a child, lest he grow in stubbornness, and regard thee not, and so be a sorrow of heart to thee. Eccl. xxx. 12. And again: He that loveth his son, frequently chastiseth him. . . A horse not broken becometh stubborn, and a child left to himself will become head-strong. Ibid. xxx. 1-8. Also, see Prov. xxix. 15. How different to this is the false sentiment in which many parents indulge in regard to the training of children! . .*

5°. In a word, the father and mother who are too indulgent are displeasing to God, are cruel towards their children, are the enemy of their own soul. . .

II. What should the correction be?

1°. There are some who say that they admonish and correct much, but without fruit. . . This doubtless comes from the fact that they do so in the wrong way. Two things are required: *intention* and *method*.

2°. The intention, or motive, should be pure, that is, it should be influenced simply by the following considerations: the honour of God, and the good of the children. . . In this respect those are lacking who (1) merely gratify their own temper, and vindictively chastise their children; (2) who act from anger, because they dislike this or that defect which, perhaps, may be in itself only slight; (3) who are always angry and correct all faults with the same severity; (4) who discriminate, or make a difference between their children, spoiling some, by tolerating everything, and putting up with nothing in others; (5) who punish not from a pure motive; but, under the influence of anger, accompany their chastisement with curses or blasphemies or contempt or calling of names. . .

3°. Accordingly, O parents, put every motive from your mind except the two already mentioned, the honour of God and the improvement of your children: if you do so, you will

never deviate from the right method and your correction will be proper, just, and efficacious.

4° Pursuing this question of method further, we might compare it to that of a skilled physician. . . He (1) studies the disease and the disposition of the patient ; (2) he chooses the medicine and prescribes how much is to be given ; (3) he also states the time when it is to be taken. . . Follow this method, O parents : look upon your children as patients ; yourselves as physicians ; correction and chastisement as the medicine. Let us follow out this example a little further in detail :

(1) The medicine must be decided on, and a proper measure given : that is, the punishment must be tempered to the kind and gravity of the vice. Do not make the mistake of regarding inadvertence as malice, or of treating slight defects as grave ones. If you do, your chastisement will only have the effect of hardening and exasperating the mind. . . Let not the punishment be always severe ; an exhortation, serious but kind, or even a look of admonition, frequently does far more good. . . Sometimes indeed children must be rather severely dealt with ; but do not have recourse at once to the rod, as there are other ways that may be more effective. For instance, you might be able to make them feel ashamed ; or you might deny them a certain recreation or enjoyment ; or if there be question of a work that is wrongly done, it might be destroyed. . . This above all, never forget that the amount of punishment must always be decided by the consideration, *how much is necessary and sufficient* ? . .

(2) And not only the fault, but also the disposition and condition of the erring one, should be considered. It would be a mistake, for instance, to treat small and grown children in the same way : the former should be restrained by some means that makes an impression on the senses, and immediately when taken in the act ; the latter, in a manner that appeals to reason, and after some time has elapsed. . .

(3) The time must be opportunely chosen. . . Sometimes it is well to leave the culprits in fear and expectation

of punishment. . . You will ask, at what age should correction begin? By all means, from the very tenderest years, for then the mind is most docile, and can easily be turned in the right direction.

(4) All the time, O parents, commend the matter to God, that he may bless your remedy; and let the children know that. Thus they will come to realize that they are punished, not out of anger, but from love. In this way the chastisement will have more effect, and later on, when they grow in reason, and understand the benefit of it, they will feel, not resentment, but gratitude. . .

III. What are the defects?

1°. There is a certain class of parents who might be described as soft and easy going, who love their children with a foolish love, and fear to punish them, especially when they cry. And what is the result? Later on those children, unchecked in time, become little tyrants towards domestics, and even imperious towards the parents themselves. . .

2°. But, they will say, who can beat a child so young, who has not yet come to the use of reason? I do not say that a child should be beaten. I merely say that you should not give in to its self-will, and let it have its own way. And the very fact that it has not come to the use of reason is all the greater reason why you should govern and restrain it. Later on it will be too late, for vices may have taken root, and the child may have gone beyond the period of amendment.

3°. There are parents who indeed reprimand their children but never go beyond words. . . Tell me, if you hear that your son is keeping bad company, or that your daughter has been guilty of an imprudence that cannot be overlooked, do you think it is enough to say, as we read in the Book of Kings (1 Kings ii. 23, 24) of the soft and indulgent Heli, *Why do ye these kinds of things. . . Do not so, my sons?* . . . Neither will empty threats suffice, for youths despise such; but be practical, be earnest, come to something more real.

Unless you wish your children to be damned, you should not, other remedies failing, withhold your hand. . . .

4°. Again there are parents who neither chastise their children themselves, nor permit them to be chastised at school; nay more, they are ever defending and protecting them, as if they were as innocent as angels. . . . Of such foolishness we need not delay to speak, especially in view of all that has been said. . . .

5°. It sometimes happens that, when a wise father takes down the rod, a too tender mother steps in and will not permit its use; or it may be the other way, a too soft father interferes with a sensible mother. . . .

6°. Woe to you, foolish parents; what answer shall you make to the eternal Judge, when He demands an account of you for the vices perhaps many and great of your children? Listen to the words which the Lord, through the mouth of Samuel, addressed to Heli, who was a type of the over-indulgent father: *Behold I do a thing in Israel, and whosoever shall hear it, both his ears shall tingle. . . . Therefore have I sworn to the house of Heli, that the iniquity of his house shall not be expiated with victims nor offerings for ever.* 1 Kings iii. 11, 14. . . .

7°. In fine, there are parents who begin too late to apply correction, after the vices which should have been extirpated from youth have struck roots too deep to be plucked up. . . .

8°. What then should we say? Imitate, O parents, the heavenly Father who *rebukes and chastises the children whom He loves.* Apoc. iii. 19; do it firmly and kindly that you may be like to, and worthy of, the Father of wisdom. . . .

SIXTH PART : GOOD EXAMPLE.

The most important thing in all moral education, that it may be good and efficacious, is example. We will then consider this important subject under two heads:

I. Why should good example be given?**II. What are the contrary defects?****I. Why should good example be given?**

1°. Because it is an efficacious means of forming the moral character of children. As children bear the corporal image of their father through birth, so they get his moral image by example. Hence the common saying, that the son is the *image* of his father. This saying refers chiefly to corporal likeness; but the moral likeness becomes just as striking. Do not, I beg of you, lose sight of this important consideration. To put it briefly, we might say: education is slow and difficult by precept, it is short and easy by example. . . .

2°. In order to reap an abundant harvest the farmer must attend to many things; but all his efforts will be in vain without the sun's rays. Similarly in education, without the light of good example, all else will avail nothing.

3°. A father, for instance, may say many beautiful things about piety, temperance, etc., but, unless he give good example, they will fall flat and meaningless; we can easily imagine what the son of such a father will say and think. It will avail little if a father can only say: *Imitate Christ*; but it will avail much if he, in the words of the Apostle, can say: *Be ye followers of me; as I also am of Christ*. 1 Cor. xi. i. . . . Good example, even without words, profits much; but many words, without example, nothing. . . .

4°. The parent who guards his children from evil companionship does well. But what good is it, if the home influence be worse than that abroad? And remember that

the same act of intemperance or blasphemy, for example, becomes worse in the home than abroad, because of the greater influence, and deeper effect, in the former place. . . .

5°. And of what profit is correction, if that which you reprimand in the child is a glaring fault in yourself? By sheer physical force you may conquer, but your conquering will be in vain. Your children will come to despise both yourself and your chastisements; and, soured by punishment, and strengthened by bad example, will grow worse from day to day.

They will even say, if not in word, at least in their heart: father, mother, begin with yourself, go before and show me the way; you forbid anger, then first show yourself patient. . . .

6°. Therefore example is necessary. Unless you make up your mind to give it, you might as well leave correction alone. And then take the consequences—those here, and those hereafter. . . .

II. What are the contrary defects?

1°. Of course those parents sin who rarely pray, rarely frequent the church, scarcely ever perform a religious act, and, so far from giving an example of piety to their children, are, on the contrary, a rock of scandal to them. . . .

2°. They sin who scarcely ever talk about anything except wealth, the display of luxury and fashion, the theatre, and worldly festivities; as well as those who can seldom or never engage in conversation unless it is spiced with criticism of their neighbour's defects. . . .

3°. They sin who admit into their house bad books, papers and periodicals. . . .

4°. And, needless to say, they sin who are given to quarrelling, to blasphemy, to anger, to detraction, to immodest conversation, to drunkenness, or other vices.

What blessing can possibly descend on such a family? On the other hand, where good example abounds, there are peace, virtue and happiness. . . .

SEVENTH PART : CORPORAL EDUCATION.

I. What kind should it be ?

II. What are the faults in regard to it ?

I. What kind should it be ?

1°. First as to its meaning. By corporal education are meant the care and the means that parents are bound to take in regard to the rearing, the upbringing, and the becoming state of life of their children. . . .

2°. Children should be cared for with solicitude from their tenderest years, and should be protected from a thousand dangers. . . . They should not be left to themselves, nor should they be committed to imprudent hands, lest they suffer bodily injury or deformity.

3°. They should, according to their state of life, and the means of their parents, be given a profession, or a trade, or some way of living, by which they can later on provide for themselves. . . .

4°. The golden rule for parents in regard to temporal affairs is a serious but not all absorbing attention, just such attention as would be given to a necessary but secondary matter. . . .

5°. It is due to children by the law of nature. This law (1) is impressed on the hearts of parents ; (2) it is confirmed by the example of animals and birds, which provide for their young : from which we can conclude *a fortiori* how much more in the case of human beings ; (3) it is proved by its opposite, the unnaturalness of parents in subjecting their children to grave inconvenience, from which frequently spring penury and want. . . .

6°. Parents are bound to this also by reason of charity, which compels us to assist our neighbour in want, but none come so immediately under that rule as children. And finally they are bound by justice, for children, by the very condition

of their being brought into the world, have a just right from nature to be provided with what is necessary, and with what is in accordance with their state of life. . . .

II. The sins herein committed.

1°. Parents can sin by *excess*, by *defect*, and by *failing to teach* their children. A few words as to each of these :

(1) By *excess* : there are some who think and speak only of temporal affairs, to the utter neglect of the moral training of their children.

(2) By *defect* : there are some who have no idea of economy ; who let their business and domestic affairs lapse into hopeless confusion ; who incur expense, and live in style beyond their means and state of life. Experience teaches how many are the cases of collapse and ruin that are traceable to these causes.

Others fail to supply their children with what is necessary for their proper state in life, with the result that debt is incurred, or, perhaps, they appropriate what belongs to others. From this springs hatred towards their parents, a hatred extending even to a desire for their death.

(3) By *failing to teach their children* : Some, solicitous only about what they leave their children, take no care to educate them. The inevitable result is, except perhaps in an extraordinary case, that the children later on do not know how to use or preserve what is left to them. . . .

2°. Others again discriminate between their children, by enriching or favouring one to the detriment of the others. This imprudence—injustice would be a better name—begets any amount of trouble for both themselves and their children. . . .

3°. Finally, there are parents who by drinking and gambling, and by rendering themselves unfit to manage their affairs, lose what they had. . . . Deep is the crime of the prodigal father. . . . Wife and children of such a man, I pity you. . . . Cruel father, you who snatch the bread from

the mouths of your children, what answer shall you make to the eternal Judge, when you fall into His hands?

4°. On the other hand, how happy are the parents who, living honest, Christian lives, fulfil the will of God, and sanctify their daily work! They are storing up merit for themselves; and they shall be filled with the blessings of God. . .

III.

THE DUTY OF CHILDREN AND PARENTS REGARDING A VOCATION.¹

Blessed is the man who finds himself in that state of life to which God has called him. On the other hand, unhappy is he who has missed his vocation: he is miserable in this life; and as for the next, he runs the risk of losing his soul. . . We will then reflect on two important considerations:

I. How should a state of life be chosen?

II. How in this respect do children and parents usually fail?

I. How should a state of life be chosen?

1°. We must begin by laying down, and remembering, the three following considerations:

(1) God it is who ordains and determines a vocation, or calling in life. He is the Creator and Father of the human race, who wishes all indeed to be saved; but not all in the

¹ See Sermon on *Vocation*, p. 522.

same way. Hence, according to His wisdom and paternal providence, He destines a particular state for each, proportionate to each one's powers and disposition.

(2) Placed or constituted in this state, man can lead a happy life and easily work out his salvation. If he miss it, the opposite is the case. Hence the oft-repeated and true saying: such a man has found his vocation; such an one has missed it. . . .

(3) Lest, therefore, a mistake should be made, the matter of a vocation should receive deep and earnest thought.

2°. Whom then should I ask and consult about my vocation? Doubtless one who both knows and loves me. My parents? They love me, but can they know me? Love is good, but not sufficient; knowledge is required. Who is it that possesses both this love and knowledge in my regard? God, and He alone: *For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counsellor?* Rom. xi. 34. To God, therefore, I must go if I would know my vocation. . . .

3°. And God will make it known, provided we ask Him, and listen to His voice. . . . And who should do the asking, the parents or the children? Both; and, needless to say, the asking is to be done through prayer. . . .

(1) The parents should ask, and asking should listen, and not presume to decide this important matter according to their own wish, but according to the decision of God; while, in the meantime, they should do all in their power to guard and cultivate the good characteristics of their children. . . .

(2) The children should ask, not alone in prayer, but also by preserving purity of life, and avoiding the din of the world and its ways, where the voice of God is not heard. Doing so they will realise the truth of the words of the Psalmist: *The Lord ruleth me, and I shall want nothing: He hath set me in a place of pasture.* Ps. xxii. . . . *The Lord is my light and my salvation.* Ps. xxvi.

4°. The parents, however, while trusting to prayer and leaving the decision to God, should not neglect to do their part. It is for them (1) to give advice, if any particular

state, in their judgment, seems good for their child ; (2) they should restrain him, if he be inclined to act rashly or precipitately, until his reason is matured ; (3) they should put forth all their authority, if he, blinded by passion, seem about to plunge into a state of evident misery ; (4) above all, they should beware lest they determine their children's state of life without reference to God, and lest they put an obstacle in the way of a vocation made sufficiently clear. . . .

5°. Young man, whoever you may be, seeing that there is so much at stake, bear in mind the following words of advice : (1) The first is from Ecclesiasticus : *But above all these things pray to the Most High, that he may direct thy way in truth.* Eccli. xxxvii. 19. . . . (2) Frequently ask yourself the question, what, after death, am I likely to wish that I had done ? . . . If I am to be a citizen of heaven, then it is for me to embrace the state that is likely to lead me there. And what state is so conducive to that end as that which God predestined for me ? . . . (3) That you may know this state, pray, pray daily, pray at Mass, pray when receiving the sacraments, pray to the Blessed Virgin and to your Guardian Angel. . . . (4) Finally, seek advice, especially from an enlightened and prudent confessor. . . .

II. The faults of children and parents in this respect.

1°. Young men in the matter of a vocation frequently remind one of imprudent sailors. They fling out the sail of life's destiny, and run before the wind—the wind of desire and passion. . . . This is what happens : at some festival or other a young man and young woman chance to meet. An intimacy springs up, and, without reckoning the consequences, without permitting reason to have a say in the matter, the most serious step in life is taken. . . . Another young man sees the way clear to his becoming a priest, and, without considering the gravest of obligations, celibacy, and the other requisite virtues, with his heart set on the emoluments, as he fancies them, he takes the irrevocable and awful step. . . .

In this way, to give only two examples, many, looking only to occasion or desire, act without once considering what is God's will in their case. Blind-folded they enter, only to see later, but then alas ! too late, the error of their way. . . .

2°. Some indeed consider the step they are about to take, but they have eyes only for its worldly aspect. In this state, they say, life will be pleasant for me ; I shall enjoy the estimation of my fellow-men ; I shall be able to indulge my whims, my inclinations, my passions ; I shall even become rich. . . . And then, later, the rude awakening, with its regrets, its tedium, sighs, its heart-searchings, its quarrels, its disgusts, nay even its despair. . . .

3°. Seeing then the folly of youth in regard to this grave question, we should naturally expect that parents would do all in their power to admonish their children of the necessity of prudence and prayer. But alas ! how often the opposite is the case ! The parents themselves frequently decide on this unhappy state, without antecedent prayer, and from no other consideration than a purely worldly one. Here, they say, we will place our son ; there, our daughter. Nor is this all. If son or daughter offer an objection to a state or position so rashly chosen without God, how often that objection is overridden by blandishments, and even by threats ! And what matters it if a son is called to another state, let us say to the religious life ? Enough that it does not find favour with the parents ; it is frowned upon, and every possible objection is put in the way. Thoughtless, or rather I should say, perhaps, foolish parents, what will God say to this ? *If then I be a father, where is my honour.* Malach. i. 6. I am the supreme Father, I am the owner, to me belongs the right to determine and decide ; if then my son, driven by you from the path I have marked out, driven to devious and to him difficult ways, fail to attain his goal, and come to eternal ruin, *I will require his blood at thy hand.* Ezech. iii. 18.

Conclusion.—Therefore I say to you, parents and children, strive with united power, that, in an affair of so great moment, you may know and do the will of God ; thus you shall find true peace here, and eternal happiness hereafter. . . .

TEMPTATIONS.¹

*Son, when thou comest to the service of God . . .
prepare thy soul for temptation.*—Eccli. ii. 1.

IN the first place, we must bear in mind that the Christian life is one of warfare ; and the time of the battle is the period of our sojourn here. It is by fighting we are to gain heaven ; St. Paul says : *Labour as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.* . . . And again : *He also that striveth for the mastery, is not crowned, except he strive lawfully.* 2 Tim. ii. 3-5. And in the Apocalypse we read : *Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.* Apoc. ii. 10.

Whoever triumphs in this war is saved ; he who succumbs is lost. It is necessary then to be trained soldiers of the Lord ; and, with a view to that, we must know the nature, the means and the conditions of this struggle.

Divine mercy calls every man to eternal happiness ; it does not admit him, however, to the enjoyment of it, except he first establish his title to the reward and the crown. For the crown, victory is necessary ; and for victory, fight. And what is the nature of this fight ? Its struggles are temptations : they surround us on every side ; but we are bound to sustain and conquer them. Nor are we free to enter or not this fight as we wish. Willing or unwilling we are ever in the midst of it ; and the outcome shall be victory or death, happiness or ruin. . . .

Victory is assured us, provided we wage the contest according to the laws and rules laid down. What, you will ask, are those strategic rules, as we may call them ? Or, to put it in simpler words, how are we to pluck victory from temptations ?

¹ This sermon and the two following deal with the three principal roots of sin, *temptations, occasions, evil passions.*

This is a question that must be decided absolutely by what we read in the Church's documents—that is, the gospels of Jesus Christ. Accordingly we shall consider :

I. What is Temptation ?

II. What are the causes of Temptation ?

III. How should we act towards Temptation ?

I. What is Temptation ?

1°. Temptation is any solicitation to sin. . . It may consist in thought, in an inclination of the heart, or in an attraction of sense to something prohibited. . .

Temptation differs from trial. The former is aroused by the enemy for our ruin ; the latter is sent by God to exercise us in virtue. The difference in name, however, is not always strictly observed, and trial sometimes is called temptation in Sacred Scripture ; for instance, in Genesis xxii. 1, *God tempted Abraham*.

Of temptation strictly named, we have a striking example in the case of our first parents. Gen. iii. . . We have another example in the second Adam, who was tempted, but not overcome. Matth. iv. Cf. Hebr. iv. 15.

2°. Temptation is an inducement to sin ; in which we distinguish three stages : the beginning, the progress, the consummation or end ; or, suggestion, which is nothing ; delectation of the sense, which is something ; and consent, which is everything. . . Care must be taken, however, that sense be not confounded with consent, nor imagination with will. . .

3°. There are various species of temptation : (1) Some are *spontaneous*, such as arise in us without our will, to overcome which God supplies His grace ; (2) some are voluntary, which arise in us, because they are provoked by ourselves and which are always associated with a certain detriment

to our souls ; (3) some are *violent* and *open*, others *insidious* and *hidden* ; or, to put it another way, some come as the roaring of the lion, others as the fascinations and wiles of the serpent ; again (4) some are the temptations of *worldlings*, others those that come to the *devout*—for instance, the devil will not all at once openly attack the pious, he will cast round them, first a hair, then a thread, then a twine, then a cord, next a rope, and finally a chain. (4) There are temptations of *youth*, temptations of *middle life*, temptations of *old age*. And thus it happens that no age, no condition of life, is free from temptation. . .

4°. Temptation, in order to get a clear idea of its subtlety, might be considered under many figures and images :

(1) Temptation is a spiritual combat, in which four things should be considered : the enemy ; the arms of defence ; the result to the conqueror and the consequence to the vanquished ; the necessity of sustaining the conflict.

(2) It is a spiritual contest. St. Paul compares our life to that of Greek athletes : *Know you not that they that run in the race, all run indeed, but one receiveth the prize ? So run that you may obtain. And every one that striveth for the mastery, refraineth himself from all things : and they indeed that they may obtain a corruptible crown : but we an incorruptible one.* 1 Cor. ix. 24, 25.

(3) It is a spark that should be speedily extinguished. A fire raging and consuming. . .

(4) It is a poison in honey,¹ mixed in a golden goblet.

(5) A dagger concealed under the cloak of the betrayer.

(6) A serpent hidden beneath the flowers ;—the honey tasted by Jonathan : *I did but taste a little honey, . . . and behold I must die.* 1 Kings xiv. 43.

(7) The forbidden fruit. The Dead Sea apple, which when tasted turns to ashes.

(8) It is the soft voice of the siren alluring imprudent sailors to their destruction.

(9) It is the net and the snare of the devil.

¹ Cf. S. Francis de Sales Introd. to a devout life, part 3, ch. 17, 20, 22.

(10) It is a tempest on which is tossed the frail barque of man's heart.

5°. All men are subject to temptations, even the most holy : *Son, when thou comest to the service of God . . . prepare thy soul for temptation.* Eccli. ii. 1.

. . . The wicked scarcely experience temptation : either because there is no need for the devil to tempt them, or because, accustomed to consent, they no longer advert to the solicitation. . .

II. What are the causes of Temptation ?

Not God; but the devil, the world, the flesh, and man himself.

1°. *Not God : God is not a tempter of evils, and he tempteth no man.* James i. 13.

Perhaps some one may object and say : *God tempted Abraham.* Gen. xxii. 1. The reply is, this was not a temptation, but a proof or trial. Again it may be objected from the words of the Lord's Prayer, *Lead us not into temptation.* The meaning is : Do not permit us to be tempted ; or, at least, not tempted beyond our strength.

2°. God then does not tempt anyone, nor does He solicit to sin ; but He permits us to be tempted. It is consoling to reflect that no temptation can assail us without the express will of God foreseeing and permitting it : *God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able : but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it.* 1 Cor. x. 13.

3°. Why, you will ask, does God permit temptations ?

(1) For proving and making manifest the virtue of his servants : *Because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee.* Tob. xii. 13.

(2) That we may know our own weakness, and have recourse to God. . .

(3) That we may be purified, *as gold in the furnace.* Wisdom iii. 6.

(4) That we may have an opportunity of acquiring virtue, and of exercising ourselves in it. There can be no solid virtue unless the soul is exercised in the practice of it ; and no form of exercise is more efficacious than temptation. . . .

(5) That we might be roused from falling into the lethargy of tepidity, and the dangerous calm of indifference. . . .

(6) Finally, that an occasion may be given us of merit and triumph.

This is the end, this is the intention of God, in permitting temptation ; and it is diametrically opposed to the end the devil has in view in tempting us. Perhaps we might illustrate the two intentions by an example—not a perfect one, but useful enough for the purpose—it is that of a doctor applying leeches. The leeches are bent only on sucking blood, whereas the doctor applies them for the patient's good. . . .

4°. St. Matthew, in describing the temptation of our Blessed Lord, uses the words : *And the tempter coming said to him.* . . . Matth. iv. 3. This suggests the manner of temptation. The tempter comes to one as a lion, to another as a wily serpent. But fear not, he has no power to do harm except to those who are willing to harm themselves. . . .

5°. A few words as to his art and strategy : (1) In the beginning he does not suggest grave sins ; but he begins with the slighter ones, and often with things merely indifferent, and then step by step goes on to the worst. Thus, for example, he tempted Christ, beginning with an indifferent act, the changing of stones into bread, and winding up with a temptation to idolatry ; (2) he vividly paints the pleasure, hiding, as far as possible, the evil and the malice contained therein ; (3) he promises that repentance and pardon will be easy, and will come at an opportune time ; (4) later on, when the habit is contracted, he suggests that now it is impossible to overcome temptation, and to live without the pleasure of sin ; (5) at last, depicting the multitude and enormity of sins committed, he tries to plunge his unfortunate victim into despair ; (6) and, above all, if you have a weakness, he will bend every effort towards it, just like an enemy who tries to storm a citadel. . . .

6°. It is well for us to enquire, when does the devil tempt *openly*, and when by *occult* and *insidious means*.

(1) He tempts *openly*, whenever he tries to induce man to transgress any commandment of God or His Church : when, for instance, he presents the sinful allurements of the theatre, of a bad book, or of evil company ; as often as he points to the scarecrow of human respect to deter one from fulfilling the duties of piety. In these we can unquestionably say that he tempts *openly*—the snare is not hidden, but openly laid for the feet of the cowardly.

(2) When does he tempt *secretly* ?

In many and divers ways : frequently the poison is hidden under the tongues of those whom he uses as his ministers and agents. They say : the heart indeed is for God ; but some concession must be made to the world in which we live. Again they say : the teaching of the Gospel should be interpreted not according to the letter, but the spirit. Or : virtue by all means is necessary ; but so is fortune, and a man should first of all establish his position in society. Still again : youth should have its fling, later on, when the passions are dead, it will be time enough to prepare for salvation. Possibly he may say : the precepts of the Gospel are too difficult, nor does God demand impossibilities ; high holiness is not for all, good enough for monks, but not suited to men of the world ; after all, the theatre, social gatherings, and the pleasures of friendship, which my confessor speaks against, are not so dangerous as they are represented ; or at least they are so only for those who are determined to abuse them ; for my part, I will enjoy them moderately, I will not lead a life that is singular, but as others do, so will I. . . . These are the subtle and hidden forms that his temptations frequently take. Away with such subtleties ; the question for me is, is it to be Christ or the devil ? The opposing standards are raised, and I must decide. . . .

7°. *The world is a source of temptation*, with its scandals, its human respect, its ambition, its love of riches, and the tumult of its petty needs and occupations, on account of

which the business of salvation—the one thing necessary—drops into oblivion. . . .

8°. And the *flesh tempts*—by which we mean concupiscence, with which, since Adam's fall, flesh is inoculated: *Every man is tempted by his own concupiscence, being drawn away and allured.* James i. 14.

9°. Concupiscence is threefold: concupiscence of the flesh, concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life. . . . It acts on the intellect by pride; on the heart by inordinate love and hatred; on the senses by the allurements of sight, hearing, taste, speech, and touch.

10°. Of the temptations of concupiscence, some are interior, some are exterior; but, whether the one or the other, concupiscence leads to every kind of sin, be it thought, word, deed, or desire. . . .

11°. *Man tempts himself.* He does so: (1) by idleness; the idle man, as the Fathers put it, needs no devil, for he tempts himself; (2) he does so by not guarding his senses, and by letting his mind and imagination wander; (3) he does so by intemperance in food and drink; (4) he does so by going into the occasions of sin; (5) in a word, he does so by pursuing, or yielding to, those things that are in league with, or pleasing to, the rebellious flesh.

III. How should we act towards Temptation?

1°. There are those who act badly; and they belong to one or other of three classes: some are rash; some are slothful; some are inexpert, who do not see the snare before they are caught, and when caught they stick there. . . .

2°. There are those who act well: they are the cautious; the brave; the experienced, who see and know how to elude the arts of the enemy. These all follow the example of Christ, who suffered and conquered temptation in the desert. Matth. iv.

3°. There are certain rules to be observed, *before* temptation, *during the time of* temptation, and *after* temptation. . . .

Before temptation : bear in mind that temptation must be borne, and prepare thy soul for it ; have recourse to flight, prayer, fasting and mortification, be brave, and have confidence. . . . *During* temptation : be steadfast in your resolution, be humble, have recourse to prayer, and be patient. . . . *After* temptation : draw around you the mantle of humility, whatever the outcome may be, be it a victory, or be it a fall. . . .

4°. And the characteristic of this spiritual combat is that it is one in which self-confidence is out of place ; flight makes for victory, humility for triumph.

5°. And one must be equipped with the necessary arms, with *sword* and *shield* and *armour*—the *sword* of prayer, the *shield* of watchfulness, and the *armour* of patience. . . .

6°. Lest, however, annoyance and discouragement should take hold of the mind, it is well to reflect on the motives of consolation ; they are the following :—

(1) The *utility* and even *necessity* of temptations : they illumine, and humble, and purify us, as well as strengthen us in virtue, and stimulate us to vigilance and fervour.

(2) He who permits them is God, the best of fathers : *God exhorts you to fight, He helps you when you begin to fail, He crowns you when you conquer.* St. Augustine on Ps. xxxii.

(3) All the Saints suffered temptations, nay even Jesus Christ Himself. . . .

(4) And as to their significance, they indicate a good state of mind. An enemy does not attack a citadel that he has already won ; nor does a thief try to break into a house, except he knows that it contains riches. *So long as the enemy knocks on the outside it is a sign that he has not yet entered.* S. Francis of Sales.

(5) Then there is the thought of the presence of God, and His all powerful aid.

(6) The powerlessness of the enemy.

(7) The certainty of immediate liberation.

(8) And, following on victory, the reward that no price can measure : *Every temptation conquered is a new crown.* S. Bernard.

7°. We should know and apply the ordinary means :

(1) Fly, pray, fight : *Watch and pray*.

(2) Resist the beginning. If the serpent once get in his head, there is danger that he may wriggle in his whole body.

(3) The enemy is very much like a cowardly bully, who grows bold before fear, and is cowed by courage. This is the character Saint James draws of him, when he says : *Resist the devil and he will fly from you.* iv. 7.

(4) Make known your temptations to your confessor.

(5) Convert them into good ; intended by the enemy to be stumbling blocks, you can make them stepping stones.

(6) Be not content with merely fighting off the enemy, but prostrate him.

(7) Humble yourself in all things.

(8) Consider by whom the poisoned pleasure is offered—the devil, whom you abhor.

(9) In temptation never delay or dally. Reject the suggestion, as you would brush off a spark of fire. Afterwards do not consider it under pretext of examining your conscience, lest you be plunged thereby into danger.

(10) Some temptations, as those of the flesh, are to be met by flight ; others, such as those to anger, are to be boldly encountered in open conflict—nay, the latter may even be invited with a view to fighting them.

(11) Keep in mind the presence of God, and the eternal truths.

(12) As in medicine, so in temptation, contrary puts out and destroys contrary.

(13) Never hold parley with either the devil or his temptation, but regard them both with contempt. . . .

8°. For special kinds of temptation special remedies must be applied. Of these the following should be particularly noted : temptations against faith, against hope, against chastity ; sadness, dryness and distaste of spiritual things ; also scruples, and shame in the confessional.

(1) As to temptations *against faith*, you must not be alarmed, because, as a matter of fact, they, as a rule, are more of annoyance than of danger. When they arise, do not

be disturbed, and do not argue with them : just elicit an act of faith, distract the mind by thinking of other things, and put away all anxiety.

(2) *Against hope.* Great sinners frequently, and pious souls sometimes, are perturbed in mind by lack of confidence, and even by the torment of despair. In such case consider the goodness of Jesus towards sinners. When has He ever been known to reject a troubled soul, or a profligate son, who has turned to Him? It is not His way to cast a straying sheep over the precipice : on the contrary, He will take it on His shoulders, and bear it back to the flock. Look at that red sea, the blood of the Saviour.

(3) *Against chastity.* Soldier of Christ in this beware. Be not terrified, be not disturbed, above all be not despondent. Remember that where there is not consent no sense feeling can hurt you ; nay more, it cannot even interfere with your spiritual progress. So far from doing so, temptation will only call forth and exercise the virtues of humility, patience, and submission to the divine will, as also your love of God, and confidence in Him. . . . However, that you may conquer in this fight, it is necessary (a) to flee the voluntary occasions, and to guard the portals of the senses ; (b) it is necessary to resist promptly, generously, strenuously, and with constancy, for in the fight nothing less than your salvation is at stake ; (c) an excellent way of resisting, especially for those who are much annoyed, is by despising the temptation ; we might imitate the example of the traveller who takes no notice of a terrier that runs out and barks at him, or the example of one who, when dust is blown by a passing gust of wind, just simply shuts his eyes, and walks on. . . .

(4) *Temptation to sadness.* Sadness is twofold, one kind good, the other bad. The former is such, for instance, as one might feel in regard to one's own or others' sins, . . . in regard to the Passion of Our Lord . . . or the smallness of the love given to God . . . or in regard to the troubles and afflictions of the Church . . . or the loss of souls . . . or the evils of this place of exile. . . . The latter is such as springs from

wounded self-love . . . from one or other temporal or bodily evil . . . or from natural melancholy that hangs like a pall on the mind. This latter kind of sadness is displeasing to God, *who loveth a cheerful giver.* 2 Cor. ix. 7. It is likewise injurious, since it leads to faults, quarrels, impatience, suspicion, and bitterness towards one's neighbours. . . . And being such it must be banished from the mind ; which can be done, either by considering the reasons for rejoicing, or by pious reading, or by proper and legitimate mental distraction, or whole-hearted humiliation, or fervent prayer ; *I remembered God, and was delighted.* Ps. lxxvi. . . . Pluck out the root of sadness, which as a rule is some secret hurt to one's self-love, or some desire not fulfilled, or some inordinate affection by which the heart is bound and enslaved. . . .

(5) *Dryness.* Some persons will tell you that they feel no devotion. Probably it is because they do not distinguish between real, substantial devotion, and that which is accidental and sensible—that is, such as causes feeling or emotion. . . . The latter, indeed, is the sweeter, but not necessarily the more meritorious or beneficial. . . . If the consolation of sensible, feeling devotion is given to you, receive it with gratitude ; but do not look for it as a thing that is necessary. In this we should imitate the earnest traveller who sets out for a certain place, and, come sunshine or come rain, he proceeds towards it without halting. . . . Consider nothing but the will of God : His most holy will should alone be sought, should alone be fulfilled. . . . Let these considerations be the solid and noble foundation of thy virtue. . . .

(6) *Scruples.* By this name are described unreasonable and empty fears regarding sin : that is, anxieties by which one fancies that sin has been committed where there is no sin. . . . Disease of this kind can become very serious ; it lacerates the soul, it debilitates the body, it perturbs the mind. . . . Say with a certain servant of God : Sadness and scruples are visitors that I never want to enter my house. . . . For remedy, obey your confessor. After he has spoken, there can be no pretext for indulging vain fears, whether they be in regard to the violence of temptation, or past confessions, or the

imaginary sin that you see in almost every action : blind obedience is the one only and, at the same time, efficacious remedy for this disease. . . .

(7) *Shame in the confessional.* He who is afflicted with this temptation should recall that it is to Jesus Christ Himself in the person of His priest he is confessing. . . . Likewise the following considerations will be of help : is it not better to confess openly than to burn for eternity ? Who would not prefer to declare his sins to one man rather than have them manifested before the whole world ?

Conclusion.—*He that dwelleth in the aid of the most High shall abide under the protection of the God of heaven. . . . A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand. . . . He shall cry to me, and I will hear him ; I am with him in tribulation, I will deliver him, and I will glorify him.*
Ps. xc.

THE OCCASIONS OF SIN.

I have restrained my feet from every evil way, that I may keep thy words.—Ps. cxviii. 101.

He that loveth danger shall perish therein.—Eccli. iii. 27.

NOT rarely are found persons who, if not in word, at least in their heart, say : I wish indeed to save my soul, but I am so bound by the bonds of sin that I cannot extricate myself. Others say : I wish indeed to serve God, but I cannot persevere in the path of divine service. When I come to confession I change my life, but in a short time I fall again into the old sins.

For both classes of persons there is one and the same reply. Do you wish, brother, to truly emerge from sin ? Having returned, do you wish to persevere in the way of God ? Then fly the occasion of sin.

A certain servant of God, in giving advice to a young man who consulted him on how he was to avoid sin, said : In the first place, *fly* ; in the second place, *fly* ; in the third place, *fly*.

We shall then, with God's help, treat of the occasion of sin.

I. What is the Occasion of sin ?

II. Why should it be avoided ?

III. What excuses are usually alleged ?

I. What is the Occasion of sin ?

1°. It is any external circumstance that leads us into sin, either because of its own nature (*per se*), or on account

of our weakness. . . . Occasion differs from the danger of sin. Occasion is something external ; whereas danger is not necessarily external, but may be internal—a something, whether external or internal, that leads us into sin.

2°. In order to understand this subject thoroughly, we distinguish different kinds of occasion :—

(1) *Proximate* and *remote*. The occasion is *proximate*, when there is grave and probable danger of falling ; *remote*, when the danger is only slight.

(2) There is the *absolute* and the *relative* occasion. The former is that which, of its own nature, and in regard to all persons, is a source of danger ; the latter is that which is such only on account of one's own special weakness, in other words, it is a question of each one's individual temperament.

(3) Occasion may be *voluntary*, that is, such as can be avoided ; or *involuntary* (that is, *necessary*)—by which is meant that it cannot be avoided, or at least not without the greatest inconvenience—such, for instance, as the loss of character, or grave temporal loss. If, however, the inconvenience or loss be slight, the occasion is not such as would be called *necessary*, but *voluntary* or free.

(4) Occasion may be *present*, that is, such as actually exists and is continuous ; for instance, it may be a person living in the same house, or an indecent picture or statue ; or it may be *non-present*, that is, such as one goes forth, or out of one's way, to meet ; for instance, a visit to a public house or tavern.

3°. There is an obligation of the divine law to avoid the occasion of sin. And, as the outcome of that law, the following is the guiding principle for both confessor and penitent : *Whoever is in the proximate free occasion of sin is bound to give it up : and if he be unwilling, he is both unworthy and incapable of receiving absolution.* *Unworthy* : that is, no confessor is justified in giving him absolution. *Incapable* : that is, if the penitent should through fraud receive the form of absolution, he is not absolved, for such absolution is of no avail.

II. Why should the Occasions of sin be avoided ?

1°. Because otherwise there is no remission of sin. Such a man is like a captive who both wishes to be free, but at the same time does not want to leave his prison. This will be abundantly clear when we further examine his state in the light of reason and revelation :

2°. There is no true conversion in the case of such a person ; there is neither contrition nor the possibility of it. What kind of contrition would suit his purpose ? How can he say : I am sorry from my heart, I detest my sins, I propose to amend my life for the future, I will fly from the occasions ?

3°. It is infallibly certain that he will fall again. *He that loveth the danger shall perish in it.* Eccli. iii. 27. *Flee from sin as from the face of a serpent.* Eccli. xxi. 2. *Be sober and watch : because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour.* 1 Pet. v. 8. But he devours those who rush into his mouth ; and those are they who expose themselves to the occasions of sin.

He that toucheth pitch shall be defiled with it. Eccli. xiii. 1.

Depart from the unjust, and evils shall depart from thee. Eccli. vii. 2.

Can a man hide fire in his bosom, and his garments not burn ? Or can he walk upon hot coals, and his feet not be burnt ? Prov. vi. 28.

Suppose your body was made of wax, do you think you would approach the fire ? Or who lying down with a dragon would think himself safe ?

What, if you shut up in the same stable a wolf and a lamb ?

What, if one chooses to go to sleep on the battlement of a bridge ?

Does not the man who sails close to a rock in a glass boat wish to perish ?

As also the man who unarmed opens the gates to an enemy ?

Does not the man who deliberately and without necessity goes amongst the plague-stricken wish to catch the disease ?

Does not he who unarmed and alone carries his treasure through a wood infested with robbers wish to be robbed?

Even such is the case of the man who deliberately exposes himself to the proximate free occasion of sin.

4°. And what shall we say more? There is the precept of Jesus Christ. *Amongst the counsels of Christ, says S. Bernardine of Sena, is one that is noted, and in a manner the foundation of religion, it is to fly the occasions of sin.*

If thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee. For it is expedient for thee that one of thy members should perish, rather than that thy whole body go into hell. Matth. v. 29.

Therefore, the man who is in the occasion of sin must, in view of those words, either break the bond of iniquity that binds him, or prepare for hell.

The devil, however, on his part, does not fail to suggest various pretexts and vain excuses, by which, having first lulled them into a false security, he holds miserable sinners in the bonds of sin. Wherefore we shall next enquire:

III. What excuses are usually offered?

1°. Confidence in one's own strength. Never, by no means, says this person or that, shall I fall; I have made a resolution to die rather than sin. Remember the fall of Peter, of David, of Sampson. *He that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall. 1 Cor. x. 12.*

2°. The help of God: He who saved Daniel in the lion's den and the children in the fiery furnace will save me. The difference is, they were not there of their own free will. . . . To expose one's self to the occasion of sin and then to hope for divine aid, what is it but to tempt God?

3°. Again it is said: I am now fully converted and my life is changed; I am no longer harassed by temptations as I used to be; the company of such a person is no longer a danger to me. . . . Beware: the enemy is only sleeping; or perhaps pretending to be asleep.

4°. Or perhaps you may say, I have not so far fallen. . . . To that I reply: there are ways that lead to the abyss;

one does not fall into the abyss immediately one enters on one of those ways ; but in the end there can be no question as to what one's fate will be. If you were to see a blind man enter such a way, how you would cry out to him, and tell him to retrace his steps !

5°. Another form of objection is : such and such society is so pleasing to me, is my delight ; in fact giving it up would be like plucking out my eye. . . . Even so, that is what Christ says you are called upon to do : *If thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee.* Matth. v. 29.

Peroration. Let us then absolutely and generously break with everything that enslaves our heart. Seeing that salvation is at stake there should be no hesitation or semblance of excuse. And, after all, the thing is not nearly so difficult as the devil, the father of lies, represents, and as fancy pictures. But, on the contrary, to him who tries, it becomes easy through the grace of Jesus Christ. . . . This grace, O Lord, I implore. Behold I am ready ; but do thou assist my weakness.

OTHER FORMS.

The foregoing considerations can be adapted and considered under the following divisions :—

I. Who are those who frequent the voluntary occasions of sin ?

II. What will be the consequences ?

I. What is the proximate, free occasion of sin, and what the involuntary ?

II. Young persons in the voluntary occasion are too daring.

III. And some in the involuntary occasion may be too pusillanimous, or lacking in courage.

INORDINATE AFFECTIONS OR PASSIONS.

The lust thereof shall be under thee, and thou shalt have dominion over it.—Gen. iv. 7.

OF the many rocks on which virtue may be wrecked, clearly the most dangerous is inordinate affection or passion. It is the most frequent cause of the soul's shipwreck.

Virtue is beautiful, heaven is desirable—all admit ; yet how few strive to acquire the one and to attain to the other ! And why ? Passion answers—passion, by which they are bound and hurried along to the abyss. This obstacle to salvation must therefore be grappled with and overcome. All the more when we reflect that the chief aim in virtue is, first, to bring the passions under the control of reason ; and next, to bring reason in accord with the will of God. Our chief labour then in the matter of salvation is to bring the passions under.

As the causes of shipwreck are wind and storms, so passions are wont to be the chief causes of human misery. Not that winds are in themselves evil ; but they are often too strong, with the result that they drive the struggling ship to the rocks. In like manner, passions become injurious and sources of evil only when they prevail against reason. . . . There is this difference, however, between the winds of the sea and the winds or commotions of the human heart, that the sailor cannot control the former, but we have power to control and subdue the latter. And if we do so, free from all danger, the perturbations and tumults of mind being subdued, we shall have

happiness and peace. With a view then to obtaining this dominion, we shall reflect on the three following considerations :

I. What are Passions ?

II. Why should they be conquered ?

III. How can they be conquered ?

I. What are Passions ?

1°. They are, to quote the words of S. John Damascene (*De fide orth.* I, 2, c. 22), the *movements of sensible desire in presence of good or evil*. This is the psychological definition, in which are contained the *subject, the object* and the *manner*. . . There is another and popular definition, which regards the passions only as inordinate, for such they usually are, and according to this definition they may be defined as *inordinate desires of the senses and flesh*.

2°. We next distinguish between the different kinds of passion ; namely, *indifferent, good, and bad*.

In the first place, all passions are of themselves indifferent, and they become good or bad according to the object. This will be clear if we analyse the different passions—love and hatred, desire and disgust, hope and fear, anger, sadness and joy. These are the roots of all the other passions, and considered in themselves they will be found to be indifferent. Let us take a few examples. Love of itself is indifferent, but becomes good, if it be love of God, and bad, if the love of something forbidden. Also hatred in itself is indifferent, but becomes good, if it be hatred of sin, bad, if hatred of our neighbour. And so of the other passions. Hence we have the division of the passions into *indifferent, good, and bad*.

Before passing from this phase of the subject, I wish to add a few words about the *bad passions*. They are (1) the three radical passions which are commonly called the *threefold concupiscence*, concupiscence of the flesh, concupiscence of the eyes, and pride of life, in other words, the passion for

pleasure, riches, and honours ; (2) and the so-called seven capital sins, pride, covetousness, lust, envy, gluttony, anger, and sloth.

3°. The principal incitements to the passions are:—(1) objects, either really seen, or apprehended by hearing or the other senses, or even pictured in the imagination ; (2) the fuel, or tinder, or touchwood—call it what you will—supplied by food and drink, the reading of bad books, and so forth ; (3) idleness ; (4) failure to respond to the restraint of authority, especially in religion and piety.

4°. The effect of the passions. They invade man, and grip him, and change him, in face, in voice, and in tremor of limb ; they perturb him in head and heart, with the result that, no longer master of himself, he says and does things that otherwise he would not think of. . . .

5°. We might represent them under the following figures and similitudes. They are winds, by which the sea of the heart is disturbed, and its boat—by which we mean upright desire—is tossed and driven.—They are a fire, kindled for good or evil.—They may be likened to horses, whose rider should be reason, just as their master is God.

Bad passions are wild beasts ; they are reptiles which are nourished in man's breast. . . . They are the diseases of the soul. . . . They are the roots of sin. . . . They are the chains of the devil.

II. Why should they be overcome ?

1°. Because it is necessary and useful to do so ; yes, just as it is necessary to put a bit in the mouth of a horse ; as it is necessary to prune the vine. . . . From this follows that it is useful also.

2°. The precept which forbids sin imposes on us the obligation of conquering our passions also ; for these are the ordinary causes and sources of sin.

3°. It follows then from reason that we are bound to conquer our passions. And what reason says is enforced also by express declarations of the Holy Spirit : *The lust thereof*

shall be under thee, and thou shalt have dominion over it. Gen. iv. 7.—*Go not after thy lusts, but turn away from thy own evil. If thou give to thy soul her desires, she will make thee a joy to thy enemies.* Eccli. xviii. 30, 31. *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.* Matth. xvi. 24; Luke ix. 23.

4°. We have the example of all the Saints. *Conquer thyself* was a saying of S. Ignatius. And the Imitation says: *The greater violence thou offerest to thyself, the greater progress thou wilt make.* i. 25.

5°. Even pagan writers insisted strongly on the necessity of conquering oneself. Horace, Epist. i. ii. 59 and following, says:

"He who does not moderate his anger will wish to be undone what his irritation and his impulse had urged him to, whilst he was hastening to inflict violent punishment to gratify unavenged anger. Anger is brief madness: conquer your mind, which, unless it obey, will command; curb it with a bridle, bind it with a chain."

[. . . *Qui non moderabitur irae,
Infectum volet esse dolor quod suaserit et mens,
Dum poenas odio per vim festinat inulto.
Ira, furor brevis est: animum rege, qui nisi parcat,
Imperat; hunc frenis; hunc tu compesce catena.*]

And Cicero (pro Marcello) says: *To conquer one's mind, to restrain one's anger, to temper one's victory, to treat an adversary who is remarkable for nobility, genius and virtue, not only by praising him when he has fallen, but even by enlarging on his former dignity—the man who does these things I count not only amongst the noblest of men, but I liken him to a god.*

6°. Otherwise, that is if the passions be not conquered, they become an obstacle to virtue, and to the salvation of one's soul.

7°. Likewise—if not conquered—they impose dire slavery; as witness the example, of Nabuchodonosor, who from being a king fell to a condition like that of an animal; the prodigal son amongst the swine; the brothers of Joseph, as the result

of slavery to horrible envy. . . . Unsubdued passions become domestic tyrants that are insatiable in their demands, insisting on the sacrifice of peace, of liberty, of honour, of health, and of life itself.

8°. And not only all this, but they obscure the intellect and perturb the heart.

9°. They even drag one on to many errors, and to acts that later will wring the heart, and bring to the cheek the blush of shame.

10°. Depraved passions are fertile in generating all kinds of miseries, in society, in the family, and in the individual himself, not for time only, but for eternity also.

11°. In fact, obeying a passion is a species of idolatry : for a passion reigning in the heart occupies the place and seat of God Himself. We can compare it only to the action of Antiochus, who, on entering Jerusalem, set up an idol on the altar of God. 1 Machab. i. 57.

12°. On the other hand, he who overcomes his passions finds true liberty. Nay more, he obtains the crown of glory : *The patient man is better than the valiant : and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh cities.* Prov. xvi. 32. . . . *They indeed that they may receive a corruptible crown ; but we an incorruptible one.* 1 Cor. ix. 25.

13°. And as to excuses, none will avail ; neither the excuse that they are too violent, nor that they are inveterate ; because, once the use of reason is attained, they can be easily conquered.

III. How can they be overcome ?

1°. In the first place one must never despair of victory. No passions are so violent that they can not be repressed. . . . Neither must one give way to complaints and regrets in regard to one's temperament and inclinations. We are more powerful than all our adversaries, if only we wish to fight.

. The fiercer the enemy, the greater our victory. . . . Herein no one is a slave except he wishes it. . . .

2°. We must fight, and we must do so with *determination*. The condition indispensably necessary for victory is that you truly and absolutely *will*, not merely *desire*, to conquer. You must be able to use with truth the words of the Psalmist, *I have sworn and am determined*. Ps. cxviii. 106.—In a word, let your motto be, *to conquer or die*.

3°. We must also fight *lawfully*; as St. Paul says: *He that striveth for the mastery, is not crowned, except he strive lawfully*. 2 Tim. ii. 5. This word *lawfully* implies many things, for instance:

(1) *Lawfully*, that is *in time*, from youth. A certain anchorite impressed this on the minds of his disciples when he bade them to pull up cypresses of different ages¹—the point being, it is easy when they are young, impossible when they are old.

(2) *Lawfully*, that is *in order*: one passion after another must be uprooted, beginning with the *dominant* or chief one. For this dominant passion is as it were the head of the hydra; it is the Goliath; it is the Holophernes; it is the one which, if not beaten down, will prove the cause of our eternal ruin. . . It must be known, and strenuously attacked in every possible way, especially by *particular examination of conscience*. . .

(3) *Lawfully*, that is *constantly*: because passions are ever recurring, or are born anew. The Abbot Theodore said to a young man: *Do you expect to conquer in a fight of eight years? This is my eightieth year of battle. . . I will pursue after my enemies, and overtake them: and I will not turn again until they are consumed*. Ps. xvii. 38.

(4) *Lawfully*, that is *with unbroken mind*. Even though you should have the misfortune to fall, rise with courage from the dust.

(5) *Lawfully*, that is *with trust and confidence*: *I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me*. Phil. iv. 13.

(6) *Lawfully*, that is *not rashly*, but *with wisdom*, by discreetly and prudently applying the means.

¹ This is well described by Rodriguez in his work on *Perfection*, II., ch. ix.

(7) *Lawfully*, that is by applying the *proper means*. *Watch and pray*. Matth. xxvi. 41. . . . *This kind is not cast out but by prayer and fasting*. Matth. xvii. 20.

(8) *Lawfully*, that is with *tact and skill*. For instance : by sanctifying the passions, in giving them a proper bent or bias, such as using one's natural disposition or propensity in the service of God and virtue ; in which we have the example of S. Paul, S. Mary Magdalen, and S. Francis Xavier. Also by curing contrary by contrary. Or we might imitate the example of the sailor, who tries to avoid the storm as much as possible ; but if it spring up, he tries to elude it, by tacking, by use of the anchor, by furling the sails, and by the many other devices known to the skilful mariner.

(9) *Lawfully*, that is by daily renewing our mental powers, after the example of the Saints : The author of the Imitation says : *We ought every day to renew our resolution, and excite ourselves to fervour, as if it were the first day of our conversion*. Imit. i. 19.

4°. Finally, while fighting, let us keep in mind the example of S. Paul, as expressed in the following encouraging words : *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord the just judge will render to me in that day*. 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

EXCUSES ASSIGNED FOR SIN.

Thy prophets have seen false and foolish things for thee.—Jeremias, Lament. ii. 14.

O ye sons of men, how long will you be dull of heart ? Why do you love vanity, and seek after lying ?—Ps. iv. 3.

We have placed our hope in lies, and by falsehood we are protected.—Isai. xxviii. 15.

WHEN a man makes up his mind to do what is wrong he usually tries to persuade himself that he is justified in his action. But as he can find no solid reason, he has recourse to an empty one ; and this is never wanting. However, reasons of this kind, which are better named pretexts, are only a veil for concealing what is disgraceful in his action ; they are bandages for the eyes, to prevent them seeing the crime that is being committed, or the precipice that yawns ; or they may be called a sleeping draught, by which the remorse of conscience is smothered. . . .

Excuses or pretexts of this kind are simply means which the devil uses to drag one into a sin, and to keep one in it. . . . Accordingly, they are most fatal, and are the cause of ruin to many. . . . Therefore, we must be on our guard against them. . . . And if we have had the misfortune to be deceived by them, we must try without delay to pluck off the bandage, and thus see the light—the light of reason.

Accordingly, we shall try to consider the flimsiness of those excuses in the light of truth.

They can, as a rule, be reduced to four heads :

- I. Denial that a particular law exists.
- II. Impossibility of fulfilling the law.
- III. The frailty of nature.
- IV. The time is not opportune.

I. Denial that a particular law exists.

There are some who wish that a law in restraint of their passions did not exist ; and, accordingly, they try to persuade themselves that it is so. But in vain ; for however boldly they may try to do so in heart, their intellect blocks the endeavour, and puts the question beyond doubt. This difference between heart and head is emphasized in Sacred Scripture in well-known words : *The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.* Ps. xiii. 1. The following are some of the statements thus made :—

1°. There is no hell. . . . As well might a robber say to those who try to advise him : There is no court of justice, there is no prison.

2°. Priests exaggerate the malice of sin. . . . But, I ask, do Christ and the Holy Ghost exaggerate ?

3°. Sin is an infirmity, and, therefore, cannot be a grave evil. . . . The answer of course to this is : Sin is an injury to God, and, therefore, an atrocious evil.

4°. God will not damn one for a slight fault. . . . Quite true ; and, therefore, seeing that He does so, the fault cannot be slight.

5°. *I have sinned, and what harm hath befallen me ?* Eccli. v. 4. . . . Just wait a little, and you shall find that *The Most High is a patient rewarder.*—Eccli. v. 4.

6°. All men sin, then where can be the evil ? . . . Even if all men sinned, still that would not justify sin. . . . But in point of fact all do not go in the broad way.

7°. The priests themselves do not do what they preach. . . . This is an exaggeration, a calumny, and it insinuates a false conclusion. Even if this priest or that should fall from human frailty, that would not justify your conclusion.

8°. Many learned persons indulge in sin without scruple ; nay more, they teach that sin is not an evil. . . . Who are those who teach thus ? . . . In any case the question for you is what says reason ? and what did Christ teach ?

9°. I do not commit sin so long as I injure no one. . . . And do you really fancy that you commit no injury ? Do you

not inflict injury on the law of God? And frequently on your neighbour? Do you not kill your own soul?

10°. No one will be damned who leads an honest life. . . . But what is it to lead an honest life? . . . Who can lay claim to that but the man who constantly fulfils his duties towards himself, towards his neighbour, and particularly towards God?

11°. If God were to damn so many, He would not be just. He did not create me to damn me. . . . True indeed God is good; but not according to your way of looking at His goodness.

12°. We must follow the custom of the time. . . . All right provided that custom does not clash with the Gospels.

13°. A person needs distraction and recreation. . . . Granted, honest recreation is never forbidden; on the contrary we are told in Sacred Scripture to *rejoice in the Lord always*. Phil. iv. 4. . . . But what is forbidden is recreation from which God is excluded, and which centres in the world, the flesh, and the devil.

14°. Such a sin is not mortal, and so it cannot hurt. . . . Are you certain that it is not mortal? . . . But suppose it is but venial, does it not, nevertheless, inflict injury on the soul?

15°. At least, if what I do be mortal, I shall obtain pardon before I die. . . . Tell me who gave you this certainty? . . .

II. Impossibility or difficulty of fulfilling the law.

There are some who do not venture to deny the existence of a law, and the gravity of sin; but who try to persuade themselves that they are excused from it by reason of circumstances. They say:

1°. The law of the Gospel cannot be observed by men of the world; it is only priests and monks who can keep it strictly. . . . If there were question of the evangelical counsels, the counsels of perfection, this might be granted; but in regard to evangelical precepts, such as avoiding sin,

it is false. . . Just as all ought to avoid hell, so all are bound to fly sin, and live a Christian life.

2°. My business leaves me no time to fulfil the duties of a Christian life. . . I say that for the avoidance of sin time is not needed. . . And as to fulfilling the positive precepts laid down, listen to the voice of Truth: *Seek first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you.* Matth. vi. 33.

3°. *Do as others* is a rule of prudence; it is not necessary then to pull against the stream. . . False: the rule of prudence is, do as Christ commanded, resist your passions, and keep clear of the broad way—that is unless you wish to be hurried into the abyss of hell with the crowd who are rushing towards it.

4°. We cannot live in the world as if we were shut up in a sepulchre. . . Granted; but there is no point in the objection, for this is not required; it is required, however, that we live not as if we were exempted from the law of the Gospel.

5°. Those who follow religion too nicely become scrupulous and mentally affected. . . What, I ask, do you mean by this? . . . Was S. Francis of Sales scrupulous or mentally affected? Are many good Christians of this kind? . . . Listen to the words of Sacred Scripture: *The foolishness of God is wiser than men: and the weakness of God is stronger than men.* 1 Cor. i. 25.

6°. If I follow the law of the Gospel, I lose my means of livelihood, and I must live. . . Quite true, you must live, both in this life and in *the next*. *Cast thy care upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.* Ps. lv. 23. Also you might cut down superfluous expenses. . . Yes indeed, you must live; but remember you must also die; and I greatly fear that, by living thus, you will find it difficult to die. . .

7°. Perhaps you will say that some injury is greater than you can forgive. . . Pray, and call to mind the example of Christ as His arms were extended on the cross.

8°. Finally, it may be objected that too much rigor is injurious to the health. . . And is sin good for the health?

. . And even if the objection were valid, is there not another kind of health to be considered ; or is the health of the body to be preferred to that of the soul ? . .

III. The frailty of nature.

Some allege their frailty as an excuse, they say :

1°. I cannot perform so many duties. . .

2°. God has endowed me with passions that are too strong.

3°. I am bound by a passion, or fatal affection, that is too much for me. . .

4°. In such surroundings, with such companions, I cannot avoid sin. . .

5°. Chastity is impossible for human infirmity. . .

To all these we easily reply in the words of S. Augustine : *Can not I do what those men and those women did ?* And in the words of S. Paul : *Not I ; but the grace of God with me, I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me.* . . And the Lord says : *Ask and you shall receive.*

IV. The time is not opportune.

Finally, there are those who, although recognising that God must be served, consider that at present they cannot do so, for the time is not suitable or opportune, either because the opportune time has not yet come, or is past.

1°. Later on, they say, I will attend to salvation ; all things in their proper time. I am now a young man ; youth is the time of pleasure, and must be given to recreation.

2°. At present my passions are too strong ; by and by they will cease to be so, and will then give me a better opportunity. . .

3°. It will be time enough before death to settle the affairs of my soul.

4°. I can no longer lead a Christian life ; I am weakened by old age, and exhausted from infirmity.

5°. I can no longer keep from sin, as I am bound by inveterate habit.

6°. My conversion is no longer possible ; I have sinned too much : *My iniquity is greater than that I may deserve pardon.* Gen. iv. 13.

7°. I will sin only this one time : the occasion is now extraordinary, and greater than I can overcome.

8°. The time of piety has gone. . .

9°. I can easily afterwards expiate my sins, and confess them.

These are some of the excuses alleged. They are all of course founded on a false supposition, namely, that time, grace, and good will are at one's disposal ; and that God, who promises pardon to the penitent, likewise promises a to-morrow to him who postpones : *I called and you refused. . . I also will laugh in your destruction.* Prov. i. 24, 26.

Peroration. Such are the devices and snares by which the devil draws men to their fall, and then tries to drag them to damnation. One or other of these mentioned will be found to have done the work in every case ; for instance, in the case of our first parents, in that of Judas, and of those who crucified our Lord. . . False pretexts are his special snare. . . Let us, therefore, be on our guard against them ; for they are empty, they are vain, and they shall have no weight before the tribunal of God. . . Let us rather, in the simplicity of our heart, and with our whole soul, embrace the law of Jesus Christ. *God does not command impossibilities ; but He expects us to do what we can, and to ask where we fail.* Aug. *Nature and Grace*, c. 43.

HUMAN LIFE ON EARTH.

God created man of the earth, and made him after his own image. And he turned him into it again. . . . He gave him the number of his days and time, and gave him power over all things that are upon the earth.—
Eccli. xvii. 1, and following.

MANY mortals in their life on earth are like to travellers who have lost their way. Doubtless this is a great evil. Seeing that man can tread this earth but once, if he make a mistake and turn from the right path, he falls into irreparable ruin. It is, accordingly, necessary for all to remember that they have but one life, and that they should regulate it according to God's will.

With a view to this it is important at once to know the cause of this error, and to guard against it ; which cause is no other than the thoughtlessness of mortals. They do not ask themselves, what is life, why was it given, how should it be spent. . . . No wonder then that they misuse it, and turn to ruin what was intended for happiness.

That we may not fall into like error, it behoveth us to consider :

I. What is life on earth ?

II. Why was it given ?

III. How should it be lived ?

I. What is life on earth ?

1°. It is a certain space of time which, measured by God, is given to man for his sojourn here. . . . It is a space, for one more, for another less, but for all measured by the two

extremes of birth and death. It has then three parts or divisions, namely, the beginning, the middle, and the end ; if it be long—not always, however, the case—it has four parts, infancy, youth, maturity, and old age.

2°. Its time, known to God, is unknown and uncertain to man. . . . Hence it is appropriately referred to as *frail life*, and the *frail texture* of our days.

3°. It is transitory or passing. Hence the Scriptural reference, *We have not here a lasting city.* Hebr. xiii. 14. . . . *Man shall go into the house of his eternity.* Eccle. xii. 5.

4°. Its time is short, either because its years are few, or because, never standing still, never returning, they quickly pass away. S. Paul, in his epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor. vii. 29), gives the warning : *The time is short ; it remaineth that . . . they that use this world, as if they used it not : for the fashion of this world passeth away.*

5°. Its time is filled with many miseries. . . .

6°. It is the way to eternity—or rather to one or other of two eternities—and yet the way is to be trod but once.

7°. Aptly then the life of man is compared to a flower of the field, to a bubble of the air, to dust that is blown by the wind, to a thin froth that is dispersed by the storm, to smoke that vanishes, to a shadow, to a ship that passeth through the waters, to an arrow shot through the air, to a bird on the wing, to a messenger that runneth on. See Wisdom, v. 9 and following.

The fabric of our days is compared to a thread that is spun by a spinner—a fragile thread which holds the sinner suspended over the abyss of eternity. . . .

8°. Again, life may be compared to a stream that flows to the feet of the eternal God. . . . God sits immutable in His eternity, and before Him He sees the stream of life ; in this stream men are sailing, some towards a happy, others towards a miserable, eternity.

9°. And, from another point of view, life is rightly named an exile, a prison, a sojourn, even death. . . . *Temporal life*,

says S. Gregory, *compared with eternal life, must be pronounced death rather than life.* Hom. 37.

Brief, however, though it be, it is the seed of immortality.

II. Why was it given ?

1°. Not for pleasure, not for play, not for amassing wealth, —much less for sinning.

2°. But that we might prepare ourselves for eternity, that we might work out our salvation, that we might build ourselves an everlasting home for the life to come. . . . For this it was given, and that being so, we naturally expect life to be :

3°. A time of probation and expiation in exile ; a time of labour, and of seed-sowing ; as also of trading, that we might amass a fortune for eternity : *Trade till I come.* Luke xix. 13.

4°. A time of expectation : *Let your loins be girt, and lamps burning in your hands : and you yourselves like to men who wait for their lord, when he shall return from the wedding ; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately.* Luke xii. 35.

5°. A time of war, to be followed by triumph : *The life of man upon earth is a warfare.* Job. vii. 1.

6°. A time of mercy, to be superseded by justice : *Behold now is the acceptable time.* 2 Cor. vi. 2. . . . *Whilst we have time, let us work good.* Gal. vi. 10. . . . What, if the blessed had more time to gain additional merit ? . . . How would the damned avail of it ?

7°. A most precious time : nothing less than heaven is the prize. . . . If the briefest moment be lost, no price can buy it back. . . . *That which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory.* 2 Cor. iv. 17. . . . *The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come that shall be revealed in us.* Rom. viii. 18.

III. How should it be lived ?

1°. How can I use my time here ? . . . I can do so well or badly. . . I can make my life one of *full* days (Ps. lxxii. 10) or empty ; of merit or of demerit ; I can store up treasures of glory, or pile up fuel for the everlasting fire. . .

2°. What is good use of time, what bad, what worst ? . . . Who are those who use it well, who badly, who worst ? . . .

3°. What should be done with time in regard to my past life ; what, in regard to the present ; what, in regard to the future ? . .

4°. How should I use my life ? . . . As a diligent trader. . . This, God and reason and the example of the Saints command and persuade. . . I should be as careful as the painter who undertakes a picture on which his whole fame and fortune depend. . .

Peroration. *Therefore, whilst we have time, let us work good.*
Gal. vi. 10.

Let us not delay : *The day of destruction is at hand, and the time makes haste to come.* Deuter. xxxii. 35.

OTHER FORMS.

Are you a young man ? Prudently examine and measure the course of your life. Consider the time already past, consider the present, consider the future. . . I. The past, whether you spent it well or badly, will never return. . . II. The present will not stay : strive to use it well. . . III. The future is uncertain ; and, even if given to you, what will it be ?

I. How long shall my life be?—II. How can I live it?—
III. How do I wish to live it?

I. What kind of life can be pronounced happy in this world?—II. What kind miserable?—III. What kind, now that the choice is given me, do I wish to choose?

I. On what depends happiness of life?—II. From what, on the contrary, spring misery and bitterness?

ETERNITY.

GENERAL VIEW.

ALL things relating to eternity can as a general rule be reduced to three considerations.

I. Why should we think of Eternity ?

II. What is Eternity ?

III. What is man in his relation to Eternity ?

I. Why should we think of Eternity ?

Because the thought is 1° salutary, 2° is prudent, 3° is not without consolation, 4° is commended by S. Scripture and the Saints, 5° nor can it be disposed of except by vain and empty pretexts.

1°. *The thought is salutary* ; and it is so for the following reasons :

(1) It draws the mind from vice, and leads it to penance and virtue. . . . Why, for instance, does a sinner persevere in his evil way ? *With desolation is all the land made desolate ; because there is none that considereth in the heart.* Jerem. xii. 11. Show me the man who *has in mind the eternal years* (Ps. lxxvi. 6), and I will show you a man who avoids sin.

(2) It is a light, and in a manner a guiding principle. Wherefore a wise man, in doubt or difficulty, will turn his eyes to eternity, and, in doing so, will find counsel, and will

be freed from the illusions of vanity. . . . S. Aloysius, on seeing worldly pomp, was accustomed to say, *what avails it for eternity?*

(3) It gives us the true perspective, or the point of view, in which we should look at things temporal, and things eternal. . . .

2°. *It is a prudent thought.* . . . Eternity is my future home, where I shall be happy or miserable. Therefore prudence demands that I should think of it. . . . Is not the man who is unmindful of it like to one who approaches an abyss with eyes bandaged?

3°. *It brings consolation.* . . . Whether there be question of my own tribulations, or of the miseries and iniquities of the world, I can see in eternity compensation for all. . . . But someone may say, is not the thought of eternity terrible? Yes, to some to be sure; but to others, it is most sweet. To whom is it terrible; to whom sweet?

4°. *It is a thought that is commended by S. Scripture, and by holy men. O that they would be wise and would understand, and would provide for their last end!* Deuter. xxxii. 29.

The remembrance of eternity strengthened the martyrs and confessors. A certain anchorite living in a sepulchre had ever in his mouth the words, *O eternity, eternity.* . . .

S. Teresa was heard to murmur the same words to herself. . . . A certain holy bishop used to say, *Every moment I place myself on the brink of eternity.* . . . S. Augustine used to call eternity the *great thought*; and he was wont to say, *O Lord, here burn, here cut; here do not spare me, but spare me for eternity!* Rufinus tells us of a certain solitary who growing wearied of penance sought advice of a certain abbot, and received the following reply: *Son, remember eternity, its sufferings and its joys, and you will be freed from the wearisomeness you experience.*

5°. This being so, *why do men think so little of eternity?* . . . Is it that they are not hastening towards it? . . . Is it that it does but little concern them? Is it that they are too much occupied with other thoughts and other cares? Whatever be the reason for forgetfulness, the fact remains that

eternity is fast approaching even for those who least think of it. What would you do if you saw a person sleeping on a railway track while a train was fast approaching? Needless to answer. And yet how many are spiritually asleep while time is quickly speeding on to eternity.

II. What is Eternity?

1°. What is it in regard to us?

It is that future dwelling place, to which all, the rich and poor, the great and the humble, the good and the wicked, those who meditate as well as they who give it no thought, are tending and are fast approaching. . . . In this life men may tread different paths; but every path leads in one direction—to eternity. Thither we tend, whether we will it or not; nor is there any resting station on the way: time, ever-flowing time, hurries us on.

2°. What is eternity if we consider it in the language of metaphor and figure?

It is a *circle* or a *wheel*, of which no one can find the end. . . . It is an *ocean* without a shore, to which the river of life is wafting us. . . . It is an *abyss* without bottom, to the brink of which men are hurried, while they sleep and play. . . . It is a *kingdom* whose sceptre extends to every generation, and whose power all must obey. . . . It is a *house*, with a thousand doors of entrance, and none of exit. . . .

3°. Such being eternity in regard to us, what is it in comparison with time? . . . A thousand years, or a hundred thousand years? . . . A duration that can be represented by some measure or number? . . .—None of these. Time, however long, at last comes to an end, and is no more: eternity never. . . . Time is as a boat tossed by the waves: eternity is the never changing shore. The briefest moment of time is an integral part of even the longest time; but even the longest time is not the slightest part, or fraction, of eternity: compared with eternity, it is zero, it is nothing. . . .

Such is eternity, and throughout this eternity it will be for us either perpetual day, or never ending night.

III. What is man in his relation to Eternity ?

In other words, what are his obligations in regard to eternity ?

1°. Man is born for eternity, and thither he hastens, whether he likes it or not. Time, ever-flowing time, is wafting him thither. . . . He is master of his eternity, that is, he has it in his power now to decide what his lot in eternity shall be. . . . This in itself is full of consolation.

2°. Man in this life hangs as it were suspended between two eternities, of which one or the other will be his lot. . . . Which will you choose ? . . . If a happy eternity, why live as if you had chosen the other ?

3°. Man as a passenger stands on the shore. Two boats are in readiness ; one of which leads to a happy eternity, the other to a miserable eternity. He must choose between them. Which will he enter, the boat of Jesus Christ and holy Church, or the boat of the devil and the world ?

4°. When does man enter eternity ? . . . How does he enter ? . . . What does he find there ? . . . What does he possess here ? . . . How long shall he remain there ? . . . What shall he there think of time, and of men still living in time ? . . . What shall be his ideas of sin and penance ?

5°. How should man prepare himself for eternity ? Should he not do so promptly, efficaciously, and with safety ?

6°. Man, seeing that he has a lasting city, not in time, but in eternity, should look to eternity, should live for eternity, should labour for eternity. . . .

7°. And he should labour indefatigably, for the entire span of his life. And if he should grow tired of labouring, let him remember that eternity will be long enough for rest. . . . *From henceforth now, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labours; for their works follow them.* Apoc. xiv

13. . . . *There remaineth therefore a day of rest for the people of God.* Hebr. iv. 9.

8° Beware then lest eternity be sacrificed for time; or everlasting happiness for lucre, or pleasure, or petty glory. . . .

9°. There are men who live for time. There are men who live for eternity. How different will be their lot!

ETERNITY—(*Continued*).

PARTICULAR VIEW.

Man shall go into the house of his eternity.—Eccle.

xii. 5.

To one who looks about the world, many things must appear extraordinary, and, at least at first sight, in scant accord with the Providence of God. All, we know, are children of the same Father, and yet some are rich and some are poor. Nay more, the good are frequently despised, and are subject to many miseries; while the wicked prosper and are in positions of honour. . . . Does not God see these things? . . . Is He not just? . . . *I studied that I might know this thing, it is a labour in my sight: until I go into the sanctuary of God, and understand concerning their last ends.* Ps. lxxii. 16, 17: that is, until I consider eternity. . . . In fact if we fix our gaze on this world only, and consider what is taking place there, we find it hard to reconcile it with the justice of God; but if we look beyond, to eternity, all things are easily explained. By the light of eternity, therefore, our eyes are opened; and not only can we understand the world and its seeming inconsistencies, but we can direct our footsteps in the way of wisdom and of peace.

With a view to this, we shall consider three truths in regard to eternity:

I. Man was born for Eternity.

II. Man treads the verge of Eternity.

III. Man holds in his hand his lot for Eternity.

I. Man was born for Eternity.

Man is born and emerges into this world ; not, however, to remain here. . . . After a time—life's fitful fever over—he disappears, he departs. . . . Whither? . . . *Into the house of eternity.* For this he was born: *We have not here a lasting city, but we seek one that is to come.* Hebr. xiii. 14. . . . *Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world.* 1 John ii. 15. . . . *I was born for greater things,* was a saying of S. Stanislaus ; and the following words were frequently in his mouth: *I was not born for the present, but for the future.* . . . On the day of his birth, man, as it were, enters a chariot to be borne—whither? To eternity. . . . Many have preceded us, young, rich, lovers of pleasure—where are they? In eternity. . . . Many are now living—where will they be in a short time? . . .

2°. What is this eternity, towards which we are tending? . . .

It is difficult to describe. . . . It is duration, but altogether different from the duration of time: for it is (1) without end, (2) without change, (3) without composition of parts.

Time, even the longest, has an end; eternity never. . . . Time changes all things, whether good or bad, that are in it, as is evident from the perishableness of all things; but eternity preserves all things immutable, be they good or be they evil: *If the tree fall to the south, or to the north, in what place soever it shall fall, there shall it remain.* Eccli. xi. 3. . . . Time is made up of hours, days, and years, which can always be numbered; but eternity has no parts: a hundred years are not a fraction, nor are a thousand years even an hour of eternity's immutable day. . . . The waters of a flood wash past a rock, but the rock remains motionless—not shifted a nail's width in space. Such is a figure—but only a poor one—of the unchangeableness of eternal duration. . . . What then must it be to be ever tormented there!

3°. Eternity is twofold, good and bad, happy and miserable: for the just, it is day without evening; for the reprobate, it is night that knows no morning.

4°. The clock of eternity, whether by day or night, is always the same. The hands point to one hour, and that is—*Eternity*. And the swing of its pendulum gives a double tick, *ever, ever, above*, and *never, never, below*—the *ever, ever* in light, the *never, never* in darkness.

5°. Into one or other, sooner or later, man must one day enter: *Man shall go into the house of his eternity.* . . . I shall go, and you shall go. . . . And then—what then? *Eternity*.

II. Man treads the verge of Eternity.

When will he enter into that house prepared for him?

1°. It is uncertain, he knows not: on any day, at any moment, its door may be opened for his entry; but it shall never be re-opened for his departure; he is then on its threshold.

2°. Number of years is not necessary: one may enter at any age, even in infancy.

3°. Nor is health a safeguard against the peremptory summons to enter, as witness the *many sudden deaths*.

4°. All stand on the threshold, the just as well as sinners. . . . How rash are the latter! They act as if they had entered into an understanding with the janitor of eternity's door.

5°. Some act prudently, some foolishly. *If the goodman of the house knew at what hour the thief would come, he would certainly watch.* Matth. xxiv. 43. . . . It is not fitting then to leave anything to chance where eternity is concerned. . . . What, I ask, is your attitude towards eternity? . . . You stand on its brink; you must certainly enter there. . . . If unprepared, how shall you bear your unchangeable destiny, or who shall liberate you? . . .

III. Man has his lot in his own hands.

It is now in the power of man to decide whether his eternity shall be happy or miserable.

1°. The time of life is the time of preparation, when man may build himself a house, and provide a wedding garment—the wedding garment of sanctifying grace.

2°. The time of life is seed time : *What things a man shall sow, those also shall he reap.* Gal. vi. 8.

3°. The time of life is the time for business and trading : *The kingdom of heaven is like to a merchant.* Matth. xiii. 45. *Lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven.* Matth. vi. 20.

4°. Consider heaven, and see the glory of the Saints : theirs is the fruit of temporal life well spent. . . .

5°. Consider hell : there you see the fruit of an evil life. Interrogate any one of the damned, and ask him who wrought him his terrible lot ? And he will be forced to answer : Woe to me ! I myself. . . . Would that I could return to earth. . . . But vain longing : *He swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven . . . that time shall be no longer.* Apoc. x. 6.

Conclusion. Now, O man, thou hast both time and choice ; therefore beware . . . see what thou dost do. . . . *Behold, now is the acceptable time, behold now is the day of salvation.* 2 Cor. vi. 2.

DEATH.

GENERAL VIEW.

Be thou then also ready : for at what hour you think not, the son of man will come.—Luke xii. 40.

THE great event, the great catastrophe, of human life on earth is death. For this, man, during the whole course of his life, should prepare himself. It is the one all important thing incumbent on him, whether we consider it from the view-point of reason, or from the exhortations of S. Scripture. And that being so, every discussion and every exhortation on death has for its scope and object this same preparation ; to be made by fleeing sin, and, if down, by rising through repentance.

In considering this all-important subject, we shall ask two fundamental questions: **Why** *should we think of death?* and, **What** *should be our thoughts about it?* . . The first question deals with the necessity and importance of meditation on it ; the second treats of the great fact itself.

I. The thought of Death.

II. Truth about Death.

I. The thought of Death.

Why should we think of death ? Because the thought is 1° necessary, 2° is salutary, 3° is not unpleasant, 4° is recommended by Christ and the Saints, 5° is easy and obvious ; and 6° because forgetfulness of it is most fatal. Let us examine each of these points.

1°. *The thought of death is necessary.* Why? Because we ought to prepare for death; and for this, meditation on the subject is a necessary condition.

2°. *The thought is salutary.* Because

(1) It begets a holy life, and piety and resignation when the end comes.

(2) It is salutary for all, both the just and sinners. Fancy what a change would take place in the face of the world, if only the thought of death prevailed.

(3) It is a thought that would illuminate man's mind, by delivering it from the delusions and fallacies of the world. These delusions are chiefly of a threefold kind, regarding, as they do, (a) life itself—which many live as if it were never to end; (b) the goods of life—which so many look upon as precious and stable; (c) and ourselves—whom we fancy to be something, whereas we are nothing, mere dust that will soon return to dust.

(4) It is salutary in suggesting right and prudent counsel. This even the heathens recognised, and they cherished in their memory the reply which Zeno the philosopher received from the oracle as to how he should live—*Ask the dead*.

(5) It is salutary in that it sanctifies man (a) by withdrawing his mind from things fleeting and perishable; (b) by turning it to things eternal; (c) by inducing him to do now what, at the time of death, he shall wish he had done.

3°. It is not an unpleasant thought; much less is it sad or terrible—except to those whose heart is in the world: *O death how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that hath peace in his possessions!* Eccli. xli. 1. The Imitation (i. 23) puts the matter in a nutshell when it says: *If thou hadst a good conscience, thou wouldst not much fear death.* . . . To the just death appears as (1) the end of their labours, (2) the consummation of victory, (3) the gate of life. . . . Frequent meditation on death takes away all fear of it; which usually springs from (1) sin, (2) from attachment to worldly goods, (3) from the prospect of an awful judgment.

4°. It is recommended to us by the admonitions of Christ and His Saints, as also by their example.

5°. It is easy and obvious. . . All things remind us of death: (1) not only holy Mother the Church, by her liturgy, her ceremonies, her cemeteries, and her monuments; but also (2) all nature herself:—the heavens which measure, by days and years, the transitoriness of time; the earth, which is the sepulchre of all; even the living things on earth—plants, animals and men—are merging towards death, and daily remind us of it: *Yesterday for me, and to-day for thee.* Eccli. xxxviii. 23.

6°. Forgetfulness of death is most fatal. And why?

(1) In the first place it is foolishness to be oblivious of that which so closely touches us; as also the height of rashness to remain in the greatest danger, without taking precaution for one's safety.

(2) Forgetfulness of death is (a) a bad sign, because it indicates the greatest levity of mind, and frequently corruption of heart, and blindness of intellect; (b) and a bad omen, since it usually precedes a sudden and unprovided death. . .

(3) It is a hearkening to the devil's prompting. Whilst Christ and the Church point to death everywhere, the devil and the world try to hide it—not openly, however, but in an insidious way.

(4) Finally, this forgetfulness takes possession of many. There are few who think of death; and they try to explain away to their own satisfaction this forgetfulness by vain and empty pretexts. And there are others who, though they think of it, do so only in a manner little becoming a Christian, their thoughts about it being concerned only with fortune, and family, and the perpetuation of their name. . .

II. Truth about Death.

Many questions arise to the mind, all of which can be reduced to the following. What is death, viewed in itself, in its characteristics, and in its circumstances?

1°. What is death? . . It is the cessation of life, and, accordingly, it has to do with living creatures. It takes place

in plants, in animals and in man. . . . In man, however, we distinguish a twofold death, death of the body, and death of the soul. And this latter is further distinguished into death of the soul in time, and eternal death, or first death and second death. . . .

2°. What is death? . . . *It is a moment on which eternity depends, whether happy or miserable.* . . . It is therefore the moment decisive of my lot, and as such should be made one of safety. . . . The devil suggests that it will be sufficient to sanctify this moment, that one may die well, but he omits to add that for a good death a good life is required. . . .

3°. What is death, or what is it to die? . . . It is to be deprived of all temporal things. . . . Fortune, friendships, possessions—where do they all go? What is left for man to take with him?

4°. What is it to die? . . . So far as the body is concerned it is to be cast into a sepulchre or grave. . . . But as for the soul, it is first led to the tribunal of God, and then enters eternity. . . .

5°. What is death? . . . It is the echo of life—as is your life, so will be your end.

6°. What is death? . . . It is the school of life—the school in which is learned the art of right living. . . . Go to a cemetery, see a sepulchre, pause over a grave, look upon a corpse—see, hear, learn. . . .

7°. What is death? . . . It is the antidote to all worldly pleasures and vanities. . . .

8°. What is death? . . . It is the wages of sin. Adam sinned and brought death into the world. Christ by dying conquered death, so that we have it in our power to fear it not. . . .

9°. What is death? . . . It is the law laid down for all: for rich and poor, for the just and for sinners.

10°. What is death? . . . It is a thief that will certainly one day come: a thief, I say, because, it will rob man of all things; it will come when not expected; it will come with violence, smashing in the house of man's earthly habitation. It will *certainly* come: therefore watch. What would he do

who knew for certain that this very night a thief would come? . . .

11°. What is death? . . . It is the coming of the Son of man. . . Various comings are distinguished; but of these one takes place at the death of each one. Then the Lord comes to take an account of our stewardship. And then: *Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh, shall find watching.* Luke xii. 37.

12°. What is death? . . . It is at once an ending, and a beginning—a temporal ending, an eternal beginning. . .

13°. What is death? How represent it? It is usually, and perhaps most effectively, represented as a horrid skeleton, without eyes, without ears, without tongue, holding in its fleshless hands a scythe, an hour glass and an arrow—the scythe of destruction, the hour glass of time, the arrow to aim at and pick down its victims. . . In the Apocalypse it is represented as a horse, terrible and swift: *And behold a pale horse, and he that sat upon him, his name was Death, and hell followed him. And power was given to him over the four parts of the earth, to kill with sword, with famine, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.* Apoc. vi. 8.

14°. What is certain about death? What is uncertain? . . . What is at the same time both certain and uncertain? . . .

15°. What is the meaning of these two: (1) *We must die*; (2) *Where shall we go when we die?* . . .

16°. There are three characteristics of death: (1) it is inevitable, (2) it is uncertain, (3) it is decisive. . .

17°. Shall I die? Nothing is more certain: in this I cannot say *perhaps*, as I might in other dangers. . . Herein not even the impious can doubt. They may pretend to doubt about hell, and other truths, but about death *never*.

18°. How often shall I die? . . . Once. Therefore if only once, it must be decisive. . . If it were given to die twice, how would those act who had already had experience? Those blasphemers, for instance, what would they say to you? . . . If twice, you might perhaps chance dying once badly.

. . . But since it can be only once, *to be lost once is to be lost for eternity.* . . .

19°. How do men die? . . . Most when young, the minority when old; some suddenly, some after forewarning sickness; some well, some badly, other some dubiously, or in a way that excites grave suspicion; some in peace, some in anguish; in a word, the manner of death varies with the individual; but still, while admitting an exceptional case, it is true to say, *as is life, so will be death.*

20°. How shall I die? . . . (1) As I wish . . . that is, as I wish to live; (2) As others do: *If thou hast at any time seen a man die, think that thou must also pass the same way.* Imit. i. 23; (3) God alone can fully answer this question; I only in part: many things I am ignorant of; but much I do know. . . .

21°. How can I die? . . . R How do I wish to live?

22°. Death is necessary and inevitable: this the just know and often think of; while sinners and worldlings suppress and stifle the thought.

23°. The death of the just is sweet: because (1) it is the end of their labours, (2) it is the end of their struggle, (3) it is the beginning of glory. . . .

24°. The death of the just is never unprovided for, although it may take place suddenly; it is ever precious in the sight of the Lord.

25°. Why is death desirable? . . . Because (1) it is for the just the entrance into glory, (2) it is the end of dangers, (3) it is the termination of their journey and their exile. . . .

26°. As to an unprovided death, it is (1) very frequent, (2) it is terrible, and (3) it is inflicted on many as a punishment of sin. . . . *The death of the wicked is very evil.* Ps. xxx. 22; the past, present, and what is to come, will combine to make it so.

Peroration. Let us conclude in those words of the Lord: *Be you then also ready, for at what hour you think not the Son of man will come.* Luke xii. 40. *Take heed to yourselves, lest perhaps your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunken-*

ness, and the cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly. For as a snare shall it come upon all that sit upon the face of the whole earth. Watch ye, therefore, praying at all times, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that are to come, and to stand before the son of man. Luke xxi. 34-36.

OTHER FORMS.

Three grave questions should be considered by me :
 I. Shall I die ? II. How shall I die ? III. How often shall I die ?

Death warns me : I. That I should prepare for eternity ; II. That I should not be unduly attached to the world, and its goods.

A school of death is the cemetery. *Come and see.* John xi. 34. . . There I see the epitaphs: *Here lies.* . . *Yesterday for me, to-day for you.* . . Many are already effaced and obliterated ; but this very fact spells in its own way the word *oblivion.* And such is the lesson that the sepulchres all, in every land, proclaim, one alone excepted, on which was written : *He has risen, He is not here.*

A school of death is the house and couch of the dying. There the question naturally arises, how did he live ; how is he dying ? If he lived well, his good works, and the prayers of those he benefited, now surround him. If badly, *the torrents of iniquity, and the sorrows of hell encompass him* See Ps. xvii. 5, 6.

In death you leave all persons and things that you loved, whether they be those you loved with an upright love, as your parents ; or with a sinful love, as evil companions. . . . As to the latter, your confessor exhorted you to leave them of your own accord and when you could merit by so doing ; now you are forced to leave them against your will, and without merit. . . . Have you made your will ? Then note the words : I *leave* my house, I *leave* my lands, I *leave* my goods, etc. . . . Perhaps you adored creatures—*Where are their gods in whom they trusted ?* Deut. xxxii. 37.

He is dead. His corpse is borne along the highway or through the streets. Stop ! pall-bearers, this is the tavern that he frequented, this is the house in which he sinned—stop ! that he might bid it a long farewell. . . .

Awful and stupendous thought : I. You shall all die. . . . II. You know not the day or the hour. . . . III. And still you are not all prepared to die. . . . If death at this moment summoned you, would your conscience fear to face it ? . . . Man may die at any moment ; death would decide his eternity ; and yet he is not prepared—is not this incredible ? . . .

How should we live ? . . . I. As persons daily exposed to death ; II. As about to die soon ; III. As already dead, in the Apostle's sense of the word : *You are dead ; and your life is hid with Christ in God.* Coloss. iii. 3.

I. What kind is the death of the just ? II. What the death of sinners ? III. What will be your death ? . . .

DEATH.

PARTICULAR VIEW.

It is appointed unto man once to die.—Hebr. ix. 27.

IT is a holy and wholesome thought to meditate on death, and, accordingly, we shall do so, considering it under three aspects :

I. Shall I die ?

II. How shall I die ?

III. How often shall I die ?

I. Shall I die ?—Nothing is more certain.

1°. All men die ; therefore I shall die. Remember man that *dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return.* Gen. iii. 19.

. . . All from their very nativity bear in their body the germ of death ; so that of the new born babe we can say, it has begun to die. . . They are signed with the sign of death, like the trees of the forest that are marked by the axe of the woodman. . .

2°. All men die : all who lived in the ages gone by are now dead ; all who are now living shall in a short time be dead. . . Generation succeeds generation like the waves of the sea ; or like the harvest that is annually mowed down ; or like the leaves of the trees that, with the revolving seasons, bud and bloom and fall. . .

3°. All men die.—Adam sinned, and, as a result, the grim spectre with fleshless brow stalks the land bearing in its hands its scythe, and arrow, and hour-glass. . .

(1) It goes forth with its scythe, indiscriminately mowing its way, and gathering into its barn—the cemetery.

(2) It goes with its arrow ; which it discharges in secret, insidiously, at a distance ; nothing too high for it to reach. . .

(3) It goes with its hour-glass, numbering the days and the hours of the living. . .

(4) And it goes wheresoever it wishes ; into the palace as well as the cottage ; spreading snares for youth, and openly attacking old age ; paying no respect to position or worth ; deaf to weeping, and not hearkening to the piteous appeals of the unprepared. . .

4°. All men die. Therefore I also shall die—my name, my age, the date of my death, shall one day be written on the breast-plate of my coffin. . . *Thus saith the Lord : Take order with thy house, for thou shalt die, and not live.* Isai. xxxviii. 1.

II. How shall I die ?

1°. As to the fact of death, I shall die as others have died : *I shall go into the house of my eternity.* Eccli. xii. 5. . . . I shall leave the world as I came into it, bringing nothing with me, leaving all things, even my body—all did I say ? No, not all ; my works will accompany me, be they good or be they bad. . . This bundle, so to speak, all must carry.

2°. As to *possible circumstances*—will it be suddenly or after lingering illness ; early in life, or in ripe age ; in the grace of God, or with sin on my soul ? . .

I know how men die who live badly ; I know how men die who live well ; it is important for me to contemplate the difference ; and it is in my power—now, not when the hour comes—to determine what my death will be.

III. How often shall I die ?

1°. Once ; not twice. . . If it were given me to die twice, I could afford to trust to chance at first, but I shall

die but once : therefore, certainty, not chance, should be my aim.

2°. Once : therefore, death will be all decisive in regard to my lot. . .

3°. Once : therefore, to die well is necessary for me.

4°. But to die well, it is necessary to live well. *Be prepared.* . . How imprudent are the unprepared, and how unhappy ! On the other hand, how happy are they who daily prepare themselves ! *All the days in which I am now in warfare, I expect until my change come. Thou shalt call me, and I will answer thee.* Job. xiv. 14, 15. *For though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evils, for thou art with me.* Ps. xxii. 4.

Conclusion. If we be prepared we shall in peace look for the Saviour, our Lord Jesus Christ, who will reform the body of our lowliness, made like to the body of his glory. Phil. iii. 21.

THE DEATH OF THE SINNER.

The death of the wicked is very evil.—Ps. xxxiii. 22.

WHOEVER wishes to live the life of a sinner should be prepared and content to accept the condition attached, that he die the death of the sinner. As an echo gives back the sound that awakened it, so death accurately reflects life.

That phrase *the death of the sinner* strikes horror. Who hearing it does not say within himself, with that instinct with which we shrink from calamity, *Far be it from me that I should die such a death?* And with what greater vehemence he would say so, if only he could grasp the full significance of the words of the Holy Spirit : *The death of the wicked is very evil!* Indeed such a calamity is it, and so horrible to the reflecting mind, that even the sinner, if he but meditated on it, would turn from the evil of his ways.

If we closely examine this evil, we shall find that it resolves itself into three stages : the ominous and awful security (by which we mean freedom from anxiety) that precedes it ; the anguish and despair that accompany it ; and the futile attempt at repentance (or rather so-called repentance) that comes too late. Hence we shall consider :

I. The evils that precede it.

II. The evils that accompany it.

III. The evils that follow it.

I. The evils that precede.

1°. First, there is the forgetfulness of death. The sinner lives as if he were never to die ; never to render an account to God for his crimes. He blasphemes, he indulges in impurity, just as if death did not await him. . . . Unhappy

man whoever you be, do not deceive yourself: *Thou shalt die and not live.* Isai. xxxviii. 1. The blasphemers who lived before you, where are they now? . . . The sinner knows this, and what is more he is aware that at any moment he may die; and that, if he die, the end of his life will be the beginning of his hell; he knows it, and yet he perseveres in sin. . . . How comes it that he can do so? Because, although knowing, he does not seriously meditate on it, but lulls his soul into dull and dangerous oblivion. . . .

And yet how explain this oblivion, seeing that there is so much at stake? If, for instance, you knew that an enemy had sworn to kill you, that he carried a dagger, and daily sought an opportunity of plunging it into you, do you think that you would become forgetful of your danger? . . . But this is an exact parallel to what takes place in the case of the sinner; death may take him down at any time; yet he walks unconscious of his danger. . . . What is the explanation of this strange madness? It is to be found in two things: the wild fascination of passion, and the subtle persuasion of the devil. The soul sips the cup of passion, with the usual result, first intoxication, and then sleep. And while the cup of passion lures, the devil insidiously whispers, not as he did to Eve, *Thou shalt not die the death*, but, *Thou shalt not die soon.* . . . In the meantime, he says, live, live with the living, live with pleasure, and enjoy life; to-morrow it will be time enough to consider such grave matters. . . . Ah! that fatal deceptive to-morrow, how often it fails to come! *Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee.* Luke xii. 20.

2°. The sinner indeed forgets death; but occasionally, however, in one way or other, the thought of it is forced upon him. . . . At one time, perhaps, death itself, in the form of a dire phantasm, rises before him and says: I death await thee; thou shalt not be able to escape me; thy hour shall come. . . .

When death took off his father and mother it probably said to him: Thy hour also shall come. . . . Perhaps it struck down in sin some acquaintance or companion, and then too it said: Thy hour also shall come.

Or, it may be, he saw a funeral passing along the street, or was obliged to be present in the Church, and then, perhaps, a voice spoke within him and said : Thy hour also shall come. He may even have accompanied the coffin to the grave, and a fleshless skull seemed to turn its hollow eye-sockets upon him and say : To this thou shalt one day come. . . And when he returned home, that same skull, in the darkness and silence of the night, seemed to haunt him, and to strike the words deeper into his sin-laden soul ; and he, accounted perhaps a strong man by his fellows, was disturbed and terrified, and this image he strove at any cost, or by any means, to shake off and flee from. Therefore

(1) He plunged deeper than ever into pleasure and dissipation, that he might harden his heart, and draw the pall of oblivion over his mind. . . He has only too well succeeded ; but ever and anon the passions sleep, and moments of silence come, and in that silence death's warning voice is heard again. But

(2) The devil approaches and says : It is quite right to be anxious about your soul ; but it will be time enough later on. . . In the meantime, live like your friends, as all do, without worry and without fear. . . Reassured by this voice, he tries to persuade himself that it is necessary for him to live as others. . . But for all that he cannot stifle the still small voice, which whispers : Everyone who follows the multitude goes in the broad way that leads to perdition. . . To meet this

(3) The devil proceeds further, and says : That hell and that eternity which you so dread are only vain fears of conscience altogether unworthy of a manly man ; only scarecrows and devices of priests ; mere exaggerations, and foolish fables. . . Who knows, or who can know, what takes place beyond the grave ? . . This alone is certain, that your joys cease with death ; wherefore, make the most of life, enjoy time while it lasts. *Let us crown ourselves with roses, before they be withered.* Wisdom ii. 8. . . Accordingly he crowns himself with roses, and proceeds to dance. But, all against his will, he has an uneasy feeling that he is dancing on unsafe

and slippery ground ; and, to allay his uneasiness, he forces his mind to that fictitious scepticism which finds expression in the word *perhaps*. . . *Perhaps*, he says, or tries to say, the Gospels are not true ; *perhaps* Christ has not risen from the dead . . . *perhaps*. . . But there is one thing, he must admit, which knows no *perhaps*, one thing which confronts him in the face, and that is : *Thou shalt die*. . . And in proportion to his sin does the image become more and more terrible : *O death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee*. Eccli. xli. 1.

II. The evils which accompany Death.

1°. Frequently the sinner is cut off by a sudden death ; and to him the words of the Apostle apply : *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*. Hebr. x. 31. . . It is a fearful change to pass from earth's banqueting to hell's fire. . .

2°. And even though death should not be sudden, but should come from sickness, it is none the less fatal and terrible. . .

But, you may say, in this latter case, the sinner will rouse himself, and will see to it that he dies well. . . Such indeed he ought to do ; but as a matter of fact will he ?

What, you will ask, is to prevent him ? Surely not God ? Not the priest ? Not the sickness ? . . Quite true, they will not prevent him ; but I tell you who will do so, *himself* and the devil. . . Let us examine the case a little further :

(1) God will not prevent him : *I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live*. Ezech. xxxiii. 11. . . And if He says elsewhere : *I will laugh in your destruction*, Prov. i. 26, this refers to the time when the sinner is already in hell ; into which his own deliberate folly plunged him ; when God will answer his cries by inexorable justice and as if by mockery. But so long as life lasts, mercy calls. . . To a dying sinner S. Francis Borgia

showed a crucifix which miraculously flowed with blood ; nevertheless, the sinner appeared in no way moved or converted. . . .

(2) The priest will not be an obstacle in the way ; on the contrary, although the dying sinner may despise and repel him, he will do all in his power to prepare him.

(3) Nor does sickness of itself make conversion impossible, unless it take away reason. Sickness does not interfere with acts of piety ; and good Christians, no matter how great their illness, receive the sacraments well. But while this is true, bodily infirmity, especially in the case of sinners, usually puts difficulties and inconveniences in the way ; and it is well known that, when one is sick and in high fever, the least effort is fatiguing. Even a short prayer can be uttered only with effort. What then if one's conscience has to be examined, and true and heartfelt contrition to be elicited ? This is not easy for a sinner in health, what must it be in sickness ? He was often told of this beforehand ; he was reminded that such an important matter as putting right his soul should not be left to the hour of death. . . . But, granted all this, even now in this extremity, the arm of God is not shortened, nor the fountains of His mercy dried up, if only the sinner will turn to him and invoke His name. . . . This, however, he will not do. . . . And what is it that prevents him ?

(4) Himself by the force of his bad habits. . . . He was not accustomed to think of his salvation. . . . Now, as before, the state of his health, family matters, and temporal affairs engross his attention. . . . He has set his mind on the thought of recovering his health ; he ardently desires it ; and, deluded by vain hope to the very last, he still expects it. . . .

And when the sickness grows worse, there is talk of getting him to make his will ; but about calling in a confessor, not one of his friends utters a word. . . .

Then at last death presses heavily on him ; a priest is hurriedly summoned, but is reluctantly received by him. . . . The sacraments, nevertheless, are administered ; but

how are they received? How could they be received by one who is already half dead, and on whom they have to be forced?

He receives them, however, for what they are worth in his case. His parents and friends say: Now all is well, he has done his duty, he is dying as a Christian. *Dying as a Christian*—would you, I ask, dare to face death after such a more than doubtful reception? and that at a time when every grace which religion can bestow is needed, especially in view of the fact that

(5) The devil multiplies his wiles, *knowing that he has but a short time*, Apoc. xii. 12, knowing that on this short time depends the lot of his victim. Fearing that his prey may be rescued from his jaws—which is still possible if only he turns to God and implores His mercy—he rages and he plots, now using to the full his last and most deadly weapon—the weapon of despair.

While the sinner was in the possession of health, and revelled amidst the pleasures of life, the devil said: Fear not, enjoy life, you can turn to God on your death-bed, it is unnecessary to do so sooner. But now, with the delusions dissipated, how changed are his words! He who so often said *time enough*, now keeps on repeating, *too late, too late*. . .

I have said: *the delusions dissipated*. Because, with mind illuminated by the light of death, the dying man now sees all things, not as heretofore tinselled over, but he sees them as they really are. . . He sees that the goods and the joys of life were but empty vanities, which have now passed as shadows. He sees the truths of religion, which he so often tried to question, to be great and stern realities: death, the judgment of God, heaven, hell, all now appear before his eyes clear and distinct, the sun of truth having scattered the fog which, during life, his passions and the devil had caused to gather round them: *The wicked shall see and shall be angry, he shall gnash with his teeth and pine away*. Ps. cxi. 10. He shall feel above his head and in his very being the unrelenting hand of the Creator: the hand which destroys and dissolves that body which it formed; which draws the immortal soul from its mortal coil, and sends it into another world, there

to be punished or rewarded according to the works that it did in this life. . . . These awful truths the dying man sees, and fully realises : yet a little and he shall stand before God, His Creator and Judge.

Across the gloom, like a ray of sunshine, the memory of divine mercy may sometimes shoot ; but the devil distorts or screens it by the suggestion : there is no mercy for you ; you despised your God ; and now He despises you, for He says : *I will laugh in your destruction.* . . . The tempter adds : Your sins are too atrocious ; look on this picture—here he paints his life. The dying man sees his innumerable iniquities like a great army surrounding him ; his blasphemies, his impurities, his calumnies, his thefts, his sacrileges ; whilst he hears the cries of vengeance that come from the infernal pit, where the victims of his scandals howl.

How, asks the enemy, can a monster like you enter heaven, the abode of the pure, the immaculate, the just and the holy ?

Furthermore, even suppose God should be inclined to pardon you, it could be only on condition that you repented from your heart, that you detested what you loved, and that you repaired the injustices committed, and the scandals given. But this you cannot do. How, for instance, can you detest the pleasures of life ? this one on such a day, that on another. . . . Here they rise before the mind, with all the softness and blandishments by which they used to lure him ; and, rising, they seem to say, we contributed to your enjoyment, will you desert us now ?

And the tempter proceeds to say : it is impossible to shake them off now, especially at this moment when you have neither strength nor time ; do you not see that you are already practically dead, that you have reached that stage when repentance is but a mockery ; do you not see that all is lost ?

Thus the awful blackness of despair overspreads his soul. He knows not whither to turn for consolation, for the past with its horrible record is behind him, the present is gliding from him, and the future lies threatening before him. Already he feels himself in the grasp of the devil, who, in dark and tempestuous night of sin, seizes his soul and

hurries it to the place he has prepared.—*Their soul shall die in a storm.* Job xxxvi. 14.

III. The evils that follow the death of a sinner.

1°. Behold lying on the bed the dead body, on which the departing soul seems to have impressed its own horrible image. Immovable it lies ; the sinner has at last ceased to sin, because he has ceased to live. Eyes, mouth, throat, hands, the organs, all the instruments of sin, bear the unmistakable mark of his doom. . . . Even his friends notice it, and they try to cover the body with a veil.

2°. He is dead ; and for the time being he is spoken of ; some (his friends), thinking only of the property he left them, praise his good qualities—his human virtues ; others, more sincere, whisper amongst themselves about his vices.

3°. The body is removed, consigned to corruption, and to worms for food. . . .

4°. But what matters about the body, if only the soul were safe? . . . But that soul—where is it? It has received its reward. Departing it bore with it the awful treasure of its iniquities. . . . It has entered into the house it prepared for itself ; it has descended into the abyss ; it has fallen into the pit that it dug : *The rich man died, and he was buried in hell.* Luke xvi. 22.

5°. The miserable soul now sees the justice of God which it despised and abused. . . . It sees hell which it scorned. . . . It sees the demons, to whom it committed itself. . . . Now it condemns and bewails its madness ; but its weeping and wailing are in vain. . . . How bitter now its penance—but penance too late ! . . .

Before its eyes is the open book : on one side are written the graces given, the conversion so often offered, the many days, the many years mercifully granted, the many invitations to do penance ; on the other side, the sins committed in return.

How it now longs to return to life, nay for one hour to do penance ! . . .

Conclusion.—Christian brethren, that hour which the damned so eagerly long for we now enjoy. . . . Let us make use of it without delay in turning to God. . . . I see here present one who shuts his heart against God who is knocking. Let us pray for that brother, and implore God's mercy for him. . . .

THE PARTICULAR JUDGMENT.

It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment.—Hebr. ix. 27.

DEATH would not be so serious but for what follows it. After death the judgment : in that lies the sting for those who are unprepared. That we may not be found of that number we shall meditate on judgment ; and in doing so we shall consider it under three aspects :

I. The Tribunal.

II. The Examination.

III. The Sentence.

I. The Tribunal.

It is that of Jesus Christ, to whom the *Father hath given all judgment.* John v. 22. . . *We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.* Rom. xiv. 10. Let us now consider the *Judge*, and *him who is to be judged.*

1°. *The Judge.* He is (1) the same Jesus Christ, who, formerly a merciful father, now clothes Himself in the power and majesty of a judge. . . Blessed are they who served Him on earth ; to them He now appears with benign countenance, inspiring love and confidence. . . Woe to those who despised Him ; to them He now appears terrible, withering them with fear. . . In the humiliation of His passion He addressed to the Jews the awful words : *Hereafter you shall see the son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven.* Matth. xxvi. 64.

(2) The Judge is *omniscient*, one who sees all things. . . .

(3) He is *most just*, who will render to each one *according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil.* 2 Cor. v. 10.

(4) He is *inexorable*, who will not be moved by prayers or entreaties. . . .

(5) He is a judge from whom we cannot escape ; who, in the words of the Apocalypse (xix. 16), *hath on his garment, and on his thigh written : King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.* . . . He is the King of tremendous majesty, and the judge who *will judge justice.* See Ps. lxxiv. 2.

2°. *Who is to be judged?* Man : (1) each one, (2) alone, and (3) defenceless and stripped of all things.

(1) *Each one*, whether he be just or a sinner : *We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ.* Rom. xiv. 10.

Each one, whether he had been master or servant : *Knowing that the Lord both of them and you is in heaven ; and there is no respect of persons with him.* Ephes. vi. 9.

(2) *Alone* : where now is your family, where your relations, where are your friends and companions ? . . . *Let them arise and help you.* Deuter. xxxii. 38. But no, they cannot : *Every one of us shall render account to God for himself.* Rom. xiv. 12.

(3) *Defenceless, and stripped of all things.* Where now are riches ? Where that influence, and those titles, which on earth counted for so much ? At the bar of eternal justice they are not reckoned ; there nothing avails, save alone one's good works, of which the Lord says : *Are not these things stored up with me, and sealed up in my treasures ?* Deut. xxxii. 34.

But if you seek witnesses, they are present ; on the one hand, the devil, on the other, one's guardian angel, who accompanied man in all his ways even to death. If your life was one of evil, your guardian angel must now be silent, whilst the devil, whose suggestions you followed, will now appear in judgment against you. . . .

II. The Examination.

The judgment sat, and the books were opened. Daniel vii. 10. That is the book of the *Gospels*, and the book of *conscience*.

1°. *The Gospels*: behold therein what you ought to have done, which was put before you in both written and spoken words, which you promised in Baptism, and for which you were strengthened in Confirmation.

2°. *Your conscience*: behold what you have done. All your actions, words, thoughts even the most hidden, from the time you came to the use of reason down to your death, are there noted; what was evil in black letters, what was good, including penance, in letters of gold. . . .

(1) What then will be the joy of the just man in seeing his good works so precious in God's sight? . . . But which, however, he could have made much better. . . .

(2) On the other hand, what must be the feelings of the sinner in seeing his crimes so foul in the eyes of God? Which crimes he could have avoided or expiated. . . . How he will long to hide himself! But in vain; he will be forced to look upon his own foul image: *I will discover thy shame to thy face.* Nahum, iii. 5. . . . *These things hast thou done, and I was silent. Thou thoughtest unjustly that I should be like to thee: but I will reprove thee, and set before thy face.* Ps. xlix. 21.

What will he say in reply? Will he deny, or conceal the fact, as he attempted to do in confession? . . . Will he try to excuse himself on the plea that he had not sufficient grace? . . . Behold, all the graces received, all the graces offered but rejected, will rise against him. . . . Will he allege that he had not sufficient time? . . . Behold, all the days and hours idly spent will now appear before him. . . . And should he say that he acted in ignorance, the very admonitions he received will come thronging to the mind to belie his statement

What remains for him to do? Will he return to earth to do penance? Alas! the gate of life has closed behind him. . . . Therefore all that remains for him is that, willing or unwilling, he must hear his sentence. . . .

III. The Sentence.

1°. To the just man: *Come, blessed of my Father.* . . . Matth. xxv. 34. You sinned indeed, but you did penance; therefore, *I know thy works.* Apoc. ii. 19. For these works, receive the crown, *enter into the joy of the Lord.* Matth. xxv. 21.

2°. To the sinner: *Depart from me, cursed, into everlasting fire.* . . . Matth. xxv. 41. For thy impurity, thy pride, thy impenitence, receive the reward—*according to the fruit of thy devices.* Jerem. xvii. 10.

He who refuses to hear the voice of Christ calling shall one day hear it repelling and damning. . . .

But, he may say, was I not a Christian. . . . Did I not believe in thee? Our Blessed Lord has anticipated this reply, and He expressly tells us how He will value it: *Many will say to me on that day: (He is referring to the general judgment, but His words also apply to the particular judgment) Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and cast out devils in thy name, and done many miracles in thy name? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from me, you that work iniquity.* Matth. vii. 22, 23.

He wishes to cry for and implore mercy, but the words stick in his throat, nor has he time to do so, for the devil seizes and hurries him to *his own place.* Acts i. 25.

Conclusion.—Which sentence do you choose? In which state would you like to render your account? . . . Let us then, beloved brethren, put our affairs in order, before it be said to us: *Render an account of thy stewardship.* Luke xvi. 2. . . . Let us remember that, in the words of S. Paul, *If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.* 1 Cor. xi. 31.

OTHER FORMS.

I. An account must be rendered :

1°. For everything : for the good as well as the bad, for time, for the sins of omission, for sins not prevented, for the manner of our actions, and the intention that prompted them. . . .

2°. No excuse will be of avail ; no way of returning will be open.

II. That account must be rendered in a short time : judgment is at hand, even at the door. . . . Are you prepared ? How do your affairs stand ? . . . If your conscience here and now were laid open, how would it appear ?

. . .

THE GENERAL JUDGMENT.

FIRST DISCOURSE.

GENERAL VIEW.

God shall come manifestly, our God shall come,
—Ps. xlix. 3.

SINNERS tread the mouth of hell, and over the eternal abyss, suspended by the frail thread of life, are held by the hand of God ; nevertheless, they boldly indulge in sin ! . . . Whence can such folly spring ? Whence this fatal and blind security ? From the thought expressed in the following words, which the devil ever keeps before their minds : *I have sinned, and what harm hath befallen me ?* Eccli v. 4. . . . Theirs is the security of the thief who says : *I will rob, and shall easily escape the law.* . . . And so he does rob, and then asks what has happened him. But finally a day comes when he finds himself before a judge. . . . So too thinks the sinner : *What misfortune has so far befallen me ?* Let him but wait a little, and he too will find himself before a Judge. There is this difference, however, between the lot of the robber and the sinner, that sometimes the robber escapes, but who shall escape the hand of the supreme Judge ? *We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.* Rom. xiv. 10.

The general judgment will be the world's greatest spectacle ; and of that we shall be a part. . . . Even the thought of it is salutary, it deters from sin and leads to holiness. . . . Many feel secure, because God at present

leaves to each one freedom to sin ; because He does not punish sin immediately, it is committed. . . . But to postpone is not to forget. Sinners, *now is your hour and the power of darkness* ; but your hour shall pass, and then will come the *day of the Lord*. Would that we kept this day before our eyes, and prepared ourselves for it ! for, by doing so, we shall have reason to look, not with fear, but with joy, for the coming of the Judge. Therefore we shall consider :

I. What is the General Judgment ?

II. What of its details and circumstances ?

I. What is the General Judgment ?

The general judgment is that judgment which will take place at the end of the world, the truth of which is an article of faith, as expressed in the Creed : *I believe in Jesus Christ . . . who will come to judge the living and the dead.*¹ . . . We ask ourselves 1°. Who will be the judge ? 2°. Who will be judged ? 3°. Who will be the witnesses ? 4°. What will be judged ? 5°. What of the sentence ?

1°. The Judge will be Jesus Christ, the Son of God, now merciful but then just, omniscient, and inexorable. . . .

2°. He to be judged will be man—every man, rich and poor, just and sinner. . . .

3°. The witnesses will be the whole world. . . .

4°. That to be judged will be our whole life, and our conscience then made public. . . .

5°. The sentence will be twofold, one for the just, the other for the wicked ; both to be irrevocable. . . .

II. What of its details and circumstances.

We shall consider them under the three following heads :

1°. The preparation ; 2°. The examination ; 3°. The sentence.

¹ If the preacher wishes to give proofs, he will find them in theology ; also he will find there the reasons for its solemnity.

1° *The preparation :*

(1). The time will be that decreed by God ; when His day comes ; when the life of man is over. . . .

(2.) Fire will usher it in, consuming all things on the face of the earth. . . . What then of the palaces, the riches, the pleasures of the world ? . . . What then of sinners, who now say, *let us crown ourselves with roses ?* . . .

(3). The trumpet will sound. It will be heard in heaven and the just will rejoice ; it will be heard in hell and the damned will tremble ; it will be heard on earth, and its sound will move the earth from the summit of the mountain to the floor of the ocean ; and being heard it will compel all to appear before the throne, for the note of that trumpet will be, *Arise, ye dead, come to judgment.*

(4). All will assemble in the valley of Josaphat ; the just with joy, led by their angels ; the reprobate in fear and trembling, dragged thither by demons. . . .

(5). The throne is prepared, which *He who judges justice ascends.* Ps. ix. 5, and lxxiv. 3.

(6). The separation takes place : wife from husband, children from parents. . . .

(7). *Then shall the just stand with great constancy.* . . . The reprobate on beholding them shall say : *We fools esteemed their life madness.* See Wisdom v. 1, 4.

(8). The heavens open, and then appear (a) the sign of the Cross, (b) the legions of angels, (c) the King of glory, and the Queen on His right hand. . . .

(9). He ascends the throne : *Behold, he cometh with the clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also that pierced him.* Apoc. i. 7.

(10). He now looks upon the entire human race, which He redeemed with His precious blood : those on the right hand with benign eye ; those on the left with glance of lightning, as He says to them, *It is I.* Matth. xiv. 27 ; and John xviii. 6.

(11). The time has come which He once foretold when He said : *Suffer both to grow until the harvest, and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers : Gather up first the cockle,*

and bind into bundles to burn, but the wheat gather ye into my barn. Matth. xiii. 30.

2°. *The examination :*

(1). The book is opened, that is, the book of conscience : *Judex ergo cum sedebit, quidquid latet apparebit; nil inultum remanebit*, so chants the Church in the office for the dead, which words being translated mean, When the Judge takes His seat, whatever is hidden shall be made public; nothing shall pass unavenged. As S. John writes in the Apocalypse (v. 5) *Behold, the lion of the tribe of Juda, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book.*

(2). It will be the conscience of each one, that is, one's whole life will be unrolled like a scroll, for one's own and others' eyes to see. . . .

(3). The conscience of the just shall be made manifest, for their consolation and glory; the conscience of the wicked, for their shame and confusion. . . .

(4). Come forth, you just, you who were despised, and a mark for ridicule; you who were lowly in your humility . . . you who no doubt sinned, but did penance; . . . you who did not shrink from the confusion of making a sincere confession. . . . *Going, they went and wept, casting their seeds, but now, coming they shall come with joyfulness, carrying their sheaves.* Ps. cxxv. 6, 7.

(5). Stand forth, you sinners, whited sepulchres. . . . Now let your ignominy be made known. . . . Whilst you lived, you hid your sins in the darkness of night, in the secrecy of your chamber, and in the depths of your heart; you concealed them in confession. . . . But now the hour is come for *bringing to light the hidden things of darkness; for nothing is hidden that shall not be revealed.* . . . At these words they come, but not with joy, they carrying their sheaves also, the sheaves of that harvest whose seeds they sowed : *He that soweth in his flesh, of the flesh also shall reap corruption.* Gal. vi. 8. *He that soweth iniquity shall reap evils.* Prov. xxii. 8. . . . *They shall sow wind, and reap a whirlwind.* Osee. viii. 7.

(6). What confusion shall be theirs! How they will strive to withdraw themselves from the eyes of parents, of friends, of their confessor, of the Blessed Virgin, and above all from Christ Himself! . . .

(7). What advocate can they implore? Their parents? Their companions? Their Guardian Angel? The Blessed Virgin? Or anyone amongst the Saints? . . . There was a time when they could be of help; but that time has passed, it is now too late. . . Will they now turn to the devil, him by whose voice they were seduced? . . .

(8). They shall find no advocate or patron; but shall be forced to reply for themselves: *Everyone shall render account to God for himself*. Rom. xiv. 12. . . Will they presume to say that they had not time? . . . that they did not receive admonitions? . . . that they did not get grace? . . . Behold, their conscience, their confessor, nay Christ Himself, will put them to silence. . . Will they venture to cast the blame on their parents, on their companions, or on the devil? It will be a trivial and empty excuse. . . Now those former friends who mutually seduced one another, will in turn accuse and curse one another. . . Young man of the world, see in this what will one day be the end of that diabolical friendship. . . While yet there is time, understand and beware. . .

(9). Their case being thus made known, laid open, and discussed, it only remains that sentence be pronounced. . . *All iniquity shall stop her mouth* (Ps. cvi. 42), for justice is about to open her mouth. . .

3°. *The sentence :*

(1) *Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* Matth. xxv. 34.

(2). *Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels.* Matth. xxv. 41.

Farewell, O Saints of God! Farewell, joys of heaven! Farewell, parents, and brothers, and sisters, and friends! I shall know you no more; because for eternity I must dwell with devils! O death, where art thou? I desire thee; but

thou fliest from me. . . . While wailing thus, the abyss opens and—all is over.

O good Jesus, who wilt one day come to judge the living and the dead, Thou art now with us as Father and Shepherd : guard me that I may not stray from Thy flock, and that, when Thou shalt come as judge, I may deserve to stand on Thy right hand. Amen.

GENERAL JUDGMENT.

SECOND DISCOURSE.

PARTICULAR VIEW.

They shall see the son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty.—Matth. xxiv. 30.

THE Lord here speaks of the day of judgment, that is of that truth which we profess in the Creed when we say : *Thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead.*

If men would consider well this truth, they would without doubt live well. Sinners would renounce sin; and the just would purify themselves still more. . . .

Sinners would be restrained by fear; the just would be filled with confidence and fortitude : for the judgment to come is a truth terrible to sinners, but consoling to those who serve God. It is a good and fruitful thought, and we shall consider it further :

I. Judgment is a truth terrible to sinners.

II. It is a truth consoling to the just.

I. It is terrible to sinners.

It spells for them confusion, condemnation, and despair.

(1) The sinner, now proud, will stand at judgment stripped of his titles and his riches, bearing the burden of his iniquities, a criminal dragged to justice, his soul imbued with the horror of hell. . . . Then the foul secret places of abomination and turpitude will be laid open to the eyes of all : to the eyes of men formerly his subjects or superiors ; to the eyes of

parents and children ; to the eyes of Christian and gentile ; to the eyes of demons, who will mock and deride ; to the eyes of saints, and angels, and the Blessed Virgin ; to the eyes of Him who always sees, Jesus Christ. . . .

(2) He will be condemned by Him who formerly came to save him, while angels and men will approve. . . . He will be condemned—to what ? To receive the reward of his works. . . .

(3) He will be carried by force into the habitation where he shall dwell for eternity. . . . How he will long for a remedy or seek for flight ! . . . But in vain ; nothing will remain for him, but horrible despair. . . .

II. It is a truth consoling to the just.

1°. It will be to him the day of triumph of Jesus Christ, of all the just, and the day of his own triumph.

(1) Christ will appear triumphant, in majesty and glory : *That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father.*—Phil. ii. 10, 11. How pleasing to them it will be to witness such triumph of their most loving Father ! . . .

(2) It will be a day of triumph for all the just. . . . Those who once were poor and despised are now rich and exalted. . . . *The body of their lowliness is made like to the body of the glory of Christ.* See Phil. iii. 21. . . . *Then shall the just shine as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father.* Matth. xiii. 43. . . .

(3) It will be a day of triumph for each one. . . . Thou, O just man, shalt not merely see the triumph of the elect, but thou shalt be a participator in it. . . . Thou canst say in the words of Job : *I myself . . . this my hope is laid up in my bosom.* Job xix. 27. . . . The exaltation of Joseph in the land of Egypt is in a manner a type of the spiritual exaltation of the just man on the last day : *Behold I have appointed thee over the whole land of Egypt.* And he

took his ring from his own hand, and gave it into his hand ; and he put upon him a robe of silk, and put a chain of gold about his neck. And he made him go up into his second chariot.
Gen. xli. 41,-43.

This is only a type, but the reality—if only we could realize it—is summed up by S. Paul in the words : *We shall be taken up in the clouds to meet Christ, into the air, and so shall we be always with the Lord.* 1 Thess. iv. 16.

GENERAL JUDGMENT.

THIRD DISCOURSE.

I. Why will there be a General Judgment?

II. How can I merit a favourable Judgment?

I. Why ?

For various reasons :

1°. That the glory of Christ may be recognised by all. *Behold, he cometh with the clouds, and every eye shall see him.* Apoc. i. 7. . . . *That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth.* Phil. ii. 10.

2°. That all may see the Providence of God, and be made to recognise that the means of salvation were denied to none. *That thou mayest be justified in thy words, and mayst overcome when thou art judged.* Ps. l. 6. . . . *I called and you refused.* Prov. i. 24.

3°. That the humble may be glorified, and the just made known : *He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.* Luke, xiv. 11.

4°. That those who sinned in secret may be put to shame in public.

5°. That the folly of those may be manifested who adhered to vanities and neglected God : *We fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honour.* . . . *Therefore we have erred from the way of truth, and the light of justice hath not shined upon us, and the sun of understanding hath not risen upon us.* Wisdom, v. 4 and following.

6°. That the body together with the soul, with which it sinned or practised virtue, may be judged and rewarded. *Thou didst receive good things in thy life-time, and likewise*

Lazarus evil things ; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. Luke, xvi. 25.

II. How can I merit a favourable Judgment ?

1°. If I judge myself, not others.

2°. If I forgive injuries.

3°. If I do penance.

4°. If I give alms. *Judgment without mercy to him that hath not done mercy ; mercy exalteth itself above judgment.* James, ii. 13.

GENERAL JUDGMENT.

FOURTH DISCOURSE.

ON the great day of judgment, three things will stand out supreme; which three we should deeply reflect on while there is time; and which we can never contemplate enough. They are:

I. The separation.

II. The condemnation.

III. The departure.

I. The separation.

Christ will separate the good from the bad, *as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats.* Matth. xxv. 32. Thou, good father, He will say, come on my right hand. . . Thou wicked father, go to the left. . .

II. The condemnation.

It will be pronounced by Christ, and ratified by the elect, even by those who were regarded as pagans. *The men of Ninive shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; because they did penance at the preaching of Jonas.* . . . *The queen of the south shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it.* Matth. xii. 41, 42. —*It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment, than for you.* Matth. xi. 22.—For love of thee, I assumed flesh . . and thou . . I gave thee a soul and the faith . . and thou . . I constituted

thee father of a family to save thy children . . . and thou . . . *Depart from me, thou accursed.* . . . Then all the elect will cry out: *Accursed, let him be anathema.*

. And the devils seizing them will cry out: *Accursed, anathema, he is ours!* . . . And he himself will be forced to acknowledge the justice of his sentence, and to exclaim: *Thou art just, O Lord, and thy judgment is right.* Woe to me! Woe to me! To me accursed, woe, woe! . . .

III. The departure.

All which woe will reach its consummation when Christ will pronounce the sentence: *Depart from me, you accursed, into everlasting fire.* . . . Then the elect will chant their canticle of praise as they ascend the skies. The damned will turn to bid one last eternal farewell, to happiness, to heaven, and to all hope. . . . Farewell, happy home, where Christ for ever reigns! Farewell, Jesus, once my Saviour, for I have lost Thee! Farewell, O Blessed Mary, who wert once my Mother! Farewell, parents; farewell, brothers and sisters; farewell, friends! . . . For me only hell remains. . . . Such, brethren, is the last scene in the tearfulness of things. On which side will you be on that awful day? Now, not then, you have it in your power to decide.

HELL.

Fear him that can destroy both soul and body into hell.—Matth. x. 28.

WHOEVER enters a hotel can order the choicest viands ; but, when he has partaken of them, he has to pay the bill. In like manner, while on earth, one can eat the forbidden fruit of sin ; but, later, one has to pay the reckoning. And what is that ? S. Scripture answers the question : *The wages of sin is death*, by which is meant eternal death, in other words, hell. . . .

If you tread a path, you take care to consider whether or not it leads to a precipice. . . . But whither does sin lead ? To the eternal abyss, to hell. . . . Alas ! that man does not consider whither sin leads ! Alas ! that he does not reflect on hell ! For, if he did, never would he sin ; and, if already in sin, he would quickly rise. . . . S. Thomas Aquinas could not understand how any one could believe in hell, and still commit sin. . . . The only explanation is that, though believing, he forgets. . . .

Certainly if he were to think of hell, he would not sin. If, for instance, it were said to the blasphemer or to the impure man, you are free, enjoy your privilege of liberty, but as soon as you blaspheme, or yield to impurity, you shall be cast into a furnace, where, by the power of God, you shall for three days suffer without dying, what would be his reply ? Would he not say ? this being the price, I will not blaspheme ; I will not pay such a price for a momentary satisfaction. . . . And still that same momentary satisfaction is purchased at the price of hell !

Oh ! if only men would realise what hell is ! . . . Grant, O Lord, that we may understand this awful truth. . . . We shall consider :

I. What is Hell ?

II. Who go there ?

III. Who escape it ?

I. What is Hell ?

1°. To attempt to give anything like an adequate reply to this question, is impossible. On one occasion the philosopher Simonides was asked to speak about God. At first he said that he required three days to consider, before he could comply with the request. At the end of the three days, he asked for further time, and after that, for a much longer period, because, he said, the more he thought of God, the harder it was to give an idea of Him. In like manner in regard to hell, it is a subject most difficult to be explained, nay even ineffable : it is a mystery directly the opposite of heaven, of which it has been said, *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived what God has prepared for those that love Him*. In fact the only created being who could fairly describe hell is a damned soul—if only it were given to it to return : *fairly* I say, because not even such an one could adequately describe it. . . .

2°. This one thing I can say, hell is God's prison, the place where an angry and infinitely just God demands a terrible and eternal retribution.

3°. In S. Scripture it receives many names : an abyss ; a lake of fire and brimstone ; a furnace of fire ; a fire that is inextinguishable, and where the worm never dies ; a bottomless abyss. Apoc. ix. 2.

4°. There are confined, chained as mad dogs, devils and the reprobate—the rejected and offscourings of humanity.

5°. The torments there endured are such that if all the pains and woes and sorrows of this life were concentrated into one, they would be but a shadow or image of them : *There one hour, as the Imitation puts it, is greater than a hundred years spent in severest penance.*

6°. There the torments are (1) *proportioned* to the merits of each one : *As much as she hath glorified herself, and lived in delicacies, so much torment and sorrow give ye to her.* Apoc. xviii. 7. (2) And they are *universal*. On earth only a member of the body suffers ; there the entire man, soul and body, is

tormented ; *Fear him that can destroy both soul and body into hell.* Matth. x. 28. The body and soul sinned ; therefore the body and soul shall be punished. From this it also follows that the resurrection of the body is necessary. . . .

7°. The pains of hell are such that the damned shall be punished in every sense, and in every faculty of the soul. (1) In the senses, they shall be tormented by fire : *Which of you can dwell with devouring fire ? Which of you shall dwell with everlasting burnings.* Ps. xxxiii. 14. (2) They shall be tormented in the faculties of their soul. In the *memory*, by remembrance of the past—the emptiness and vanity of pleasures, and the loss of time and grace. In the *understanding*, by present knowledge and realization : what they were unwilling to believe, or pretended not to believe, they now see and feel—hell, which they tried to regard as a tale ; mortal sin, which they called an infirmity, and rather an exaggeration of priests than a great evil ; that conscience which they neglected to examine and to purify, now lies open ; they see those sacrileges, and abuses of grace, their contempt of the Lord, of His mercy, and His blood. . . . With horror they loathe themselves, and are forced to cry out : of a truth I am guilty, and I merit this punishment, *Thou art just, O Lord, and Thy judgments are right.* . . . Unwilling to glorify the mercy of God, they now glorify His justice. . . . And in the depth of their conscience, the worm that never dies, the worm of remorse, is ever gnawing. . . . And they are tormented in the *will* by the burning of ungratified desire. They who knew not what it was to deny themselves on earth, now long for little ; but that little to them means so much ! They long to flee from this fiery prison ; to return to earth to do penance ; they long for one short hour of time. If only that hour were given ! . . . *But time shall be no more.*

8°. The torments shall be without *alleviation*. It is difficult for us to realize all that that means ; for, on earth, there is no pain so great that there is not now and again a lull. . . . But in hell, no abatement, no alleviation, not even a drop of water to cool the burning tongue.

From whom, we might ask, could solace or alleviation come ?

(1) Will it come from God ? From God ? whom the sinner deserted and despised ; and chose instead the devil and his passions. *Where are their gods, in whom they trusted ? Of whose victims they ate the fat, and drank the wine of their drink offerings.* Deut. xxxii. 37, 38. . . *Their god was their belly.* . . *The God of justice now laughs at their destruction.* . . *He who dwells in the heavens derides them.* . .

(2) Can they expect help from Christ ? From Christ ? whom they crucified ; on whose blood they trampled ; before whom they preferred Barabbas ; of whom they said, *His blood be upon us.* . . Yes that blood is now upon them ; the wounds of Jesus that once appealed to heaven for mercy, now cry out for vengeance. And the Eternal Father hears their cry. . .

(3) Can they expect any help from Mary ? No ; Mary is no longer their mother. . . They turned their back on her ; they pierced her maternal heart with many swords—the swords of sin. . . When she called, they despised her voice. Now she says, *I am no longer a mother, I was indeed the refuge of sinners, but I am not the refuge of the damned.* . .

(4) From whom then ? From their companions in hell ? . . In the height of their defiance and audacity, they said, perhaps, *I shall not be alone in hell.* Quite true, they shall not be alone ; of this they shall ever be reminded, for their greater torment, by the hatred, the shrieking and the cursing of those around them. . .

(5) From the saints ? . . Let us make the case, which alas ! will be but too common, of a mother saved and a son lost. That mother will turn to God and say, *Thou art just, O Lord, and thy judgments are right*, while to her son she will say, *Thou art no longer my son ; I know thee not, except as the son of the devil.* . .

(6) Will duration bring any alleviation ? As many years as there are blades of grass in the meadows, leaves on the

trees of the forest, sands on the sea-shore, drops of water in the ocean, and atoms in the air, shall pass, and still eternity shall only be beginning. . . .

(7) And what of death? . . . It will fly from them. Nothing will remain but iniquity, torment, madness, despair.

9°. In view of all this, O sinner, I put you the following question : Do you believe in hell, or do you not ? If you do not, you are not a Christian, for you refuse to believe in divine revelation. If you do believe, why do you live as if hell did not exist ? . . .

II. Who go to Hell ?

1°. All who die in a state of mortal sin. . . . One such sin is sufficient, as is strikingly proved and proclaimed by the fall of the angels. . . .

2°. A distinction must, however, be made between *meriting* hell, and *entering* there. . . . The sinner kindles against himself, even in this life, the anger of God, although he is not made to feel it ; but if he die in mortal sin, he shall feel the dreadful weight of that anger, in punishment that is both awful and eternal. . . .

3°. And do many fall into hell ? Yes, as thick as flakes of snow, as numberless as autumn leaves in the forest. . . .

4°. Jesus, as He contemplated the world, said : *Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat.* Matth. vii. 13.

5°. Those who perish may be reduced to three classes : (1) those who, through perversity of will, are culpably ignorant of the truths of faith ; (2) those who know them, but do not observe them ; (3) those who observe them badly. . . . Coming to particular, and concrete cases, we should say that the following are sinners who shall certainly one day find themselves there :

6°. Those who, like the impenitent thief, blaspheme God their Creator. . . .

7°. Those who do not perform works of charity : *Depart from me, you accursed, into everlasting fire. . . . For I was hungry, and you gave me not to eat : I was thirsty, and you gave me not to drink.* Matth. xxv. 42.

8°. Those who resist any great grace, such as a mission. Because like the Pharisees they are deaf to the words of the Lord, and as such come under that terrible sentence : *You shall die in your sin.* John, viii. 21.

9°. Those who put off their conversion, and dare to tread the mouth of the abyss, exposed to the danger of falling in at any moment : *He that loveth the danger shall perish in it.* Eccli. iii. 27.

10°. Those who, like the rich man who dined sumptuously, are unwilling to renounce their sinful pleasures : *Whose god is their belly.* Phil. iii. 19.

11°. Those who, Judas like, sacrifice everything to a desire for money, whose god is mammon, who adore the golden calf. . . . Those who neglect to restore what they have unjustly acquired : they with their money shall descend into hell—it is meant of course, *branded with the sin of their money*, for not a penny shall they take with them. . . .

12°. Those who—to use the comparison of the foolish virgins—sleep in mortal sin. When they wake, they shall find that, while they slept, the bridegroom came, *and the door was shut.* Matth. xxv. 10.

13°. Those who do not forgive their enemies. They shall find themselves in the same position as the servant who without showing mercy demanded a trifling debt from a fellow-servant, and cast him into prison. Matth. xxvi. . . . *Judgment without mercy to him that hath not done mercy.* James, ii. 13.

14°. Finally, those who abuse grace. *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire.* Matth. vii. 19. And the greater the graces, the deeper their place in hell ; so that we may distinguish three classes in that dreadful abode : the gentiles or heathens ; the Jews who rejected Christ ; Christians who despise the sacraments or trample them under foot. . . .

III. Who escape Hell ?

They who are free from sin. This freedom can be procured in the following different ways :

1°. First by avoiding it : which is the way of innocence. . .

2°. By expiating it : which is the way of penance. . .

3°. By prayer and confession of sin : which was the way of the penitent thief. . .

4°. By fleeing the occasion, and weeping bitterly : as S. Peter did. . .

5°. By following generously and with whole-heartedness the light of grace : as S. Paul did. . .

6°. By making a sincere confession : which is the ordinary way for those who have fallen. The confessional is the gate of heaven ; and the confessor, so far as you are concerned, has the key. . .

7°. By repairing injustice and fraud : as Zachaeus did. . .

8°. By co-operating with the graces that are now offered. . .

9°. By invoking the Blessed Virgin. She is the Gate of heaven. . .

10°. In a word, by *willing* it. . . You may say, perhaps, I am so miserable, I have committed such sins, I feel I am so weak. . . Tell me, beloved brother in Christ, do you will it? . . . Do you will it with your whole heart? . . . Do you will it at any price? Yes, do you say? Then come to Christ, for He invites you : *Come to me, all you that labour, and are burdened, and I will refresh you.* Matth. xi. 28.

Beloved brethren, you shall all escape hell, because I have no doubt you all wish to belong to God, and to keep His commandments. . . Are you not all so disposed? Is it possible that there is one here present who is blind of intellect and hard of heart? If so, I earnestly appeal to him not to resist any longer ; I appeal to him not to seal his

damnation. O unhappy brother, why do you close your heart : *Why will you die, O house of Israel.* Ezech. xviii. 31. . . Will you alone of all here present be damned ? O brethren, let us, before we leave the church to-day, offer up a prayer to divine mercy for his sake. . .

OTHER FORMS.

In hell there are three things that will torment the flesh and spirit : I. Fire ; II. The worm ; III. Despair.

I. What has God done to save us from damnation ? . . II. Who shall be damned ? . . III. What shall they suffer, and what shall be their cry ?

I. What do the damned most desire ?—II. What would they do, if they could return to life ? If Christ should say to them, you can go hence, and still be saved, do you think would they accept the conditions ? . . III. What am I going to do ?

I. How does one merit hell ? . . How can one avoid it ?

I. Let us open hell to our eyes, by considering its torments.
II. Let us close it, by quitting the ways that lead thereto.

THE GATES OF HELL.

Her house is the way to hell, reaching even to the inner chambers of death.—Prov. vii. 27.

Thou that liftest me up from the gates of death.—
Ps. ix. 15.

BROAD is the road to hell, and many there are that tread it. . . . Many are the gates that open thereto ; but here we shall consider what are, perhaps, the four chief gates : *hatred, bad reading, injustice, and impurity.* We shall consider them separately.

I.

HATRED.

Two things should be considered in regard to it : why should it be put aside ; and how can this be done. In other words, we shall consider :

I. The motives for Christian forgiveness ?

II The obstacles and means.

I. The motives for Christian forgiveness.

1°. Hatred imprints on the soul the seal of damnation. For as God is the King of love and charity, as heaven the kingdom where these virtues dwell, and as the elect possess them as a character or mark of their destiny, so, by contrast, hatred and fury flash forth in horrid glare from the devil and the companions of his abode. . . . Then look well into

your soul, O man, and see which mark is stamped there ; for the mark of charity, or of hatred, is a sure indication of what your future lot shall be. . . . If you wish to be an inhabitant of heaven, you are called on to forgive.

2°. Forgive, for Christ has ordered you to do so : *I say to you, love one another.* Matth. v. 44. . . .

3°. Forgive, because God has forgiven you. Rom. v 8, 9, 10.

4°. Forgive, in order that God may forgive you : *If you will forgive men their offences, your heavenly Father will forgive you also your offences.* Matth. vi. 14.

5°. Forgive, as S. Stephen forgave those who stoned him to death ; as the Lord Jesus forgave His transgressors.

6°. Forgive, that you may gain heaven ; that you may be worthy of the Church into which you are baptized ; that you may be worthy of your own dignity as a Christian.

7°. If you refuse to forgive, God will not forgive you : *If you will not forgive men, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your offences.* Matth. vi. 15.

8°. If you do not forgive, you can offer no pleasing sacrifice to God : *If therefore thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother.* Matth. v. 23 ; see also ix. 13.

9°. If you will not forgive, you cannot with any profit to your soul say the Lord's Prayer. Matth. vi. 15.

10°. If you will not forgive, judgment without mercy awaits you. James, ii. 13.

11°. If you will not forgive, but, on the contrary, seek vengeance, then give up all hope of heaven ; give up all hope of peace even in this life : hatred is a poison that corrodes the soul ; it is a serpent that coils its cold slimy folds around the heart. . . .

12°. Listen not then to the voice of passion and the promptings of the devil ; but listen to the voice of reason and of God : *That you may be the children of your Father, who is in heaven.* Matth. v. 45. *By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another.* John,

xiii. 35. *Let not the sun go down upon your anger.* Ephes. iv. 26.

II. The obstacles and means.

The obstacles are the empty pretexts that are alleged :

1°. I do not, you say, bear any ill will. I am grateful for kindnesses, I love my friends ; but if any one injures me without cause, I cannot feel love for him. . . R. You say you love those who are kind to you ; but the heathens do the same. So do the Turks. Nor do dogs bite the hand that feeds them. . . You love, you say, those who are kind to you ; but what benefactor has done so much for you as God ? . . How do you love Him ?

2°. But this man, you say, has robbed me of my goods ; this one of my character ; this other shows no gratitude. . . It is necessary that I should be avenged. . . But God says : *Revenge is mine.* Deut. xxxii. 35. . . If you have revenge on your brother, have no doubt about it God will have revenge on you. . .

3°. But my honour demands revenge. . . Tell me, do you seek to repair your honour by violating the honour due to God ? And where is your victory over your enemy, if you damn yourself in trying to gain it ?

4°. Honour as you understand it is that of the heathen—the honour that is rooted in vengeance, violence and brute force. But the true honour of man, especially of the Christian man, consists in noble command and moderation of soul, it consists in the imitation of Christ your King, and in the observance of His commands : *The patient man is better than the valiant ; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh cities.* Prov. xvi. 32.

5°. But, you may say, I shall be stamped with the brand of cowardice. . . Cowardice indeed !—what if your house were on fire, and you refused to leave for fear of being thought a coward ? No one will accuse the old Romans of cowardice, and this is what their great orator Cicero says of revenge : *Conquer your mind, restrain your anger. Give me the man*

who not only praises his adversary when he is down, but even enlarges on his former dignity, and I not only compare him to the best of men, but esteem him like to a god. (Orat. pro Marcello).

What a magnificent example of self-restraint was that of John Fernandez, S.J., who smiled when his face was spit upon! The Japanese were in such admiration of it that many on that account embraced the Christian Faith.

6°. Revenge, you say, is necessary for you? . . . Do good to your enemy; and so it will come to pass, as Chrysostom says, that men will speak well of you, and badly of him. . . . Yes, perhaps, he himself may be so moved as to change his mind, and show friendship for you.

7°. What then shall I do? . . . Forgive with generosity of soul: *Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil by good.* See Rom. xii. 17-21. And that you may be able to do so, look to heaven, consider hell, meditate on Christ crucified, pray to the Sacred Heart, and to the Blessed Mother. . . .

8°. Do not say, *Later on.* . . . *Later on* is uncertain; but one thing is certain that, *later on* it will be more difficult, because the wound will have grown older and deeper. . . .

We must not then postpone, because, as is manifest, hatred is so atrocious, both in itself and in its effects, that all obstacles should be removed without delay, and the prompt and efficacious remedy of a generous forgiveness should, while God calls and is willing to help us, be immediately applied.

. . . Hearken then to His voice, O beloved brother in Christ, and it will be well for your soul. . . .

II.

BAD READING.

Having for our comfort the holy books that are in our hands.—1 Machab. xii. 9.

Having a golden cup in her hand, full of abomination.—Apoc. xvii. 4.

There is no effect without a cause. When we see great upheavals of civil society, and misfortunes in domestic society, we naturally ask, what is the cause? The cause is to be found in perversity of heart or intellect, or both. And if we enquire further and ask whence comes this perversity of heart or intellect? we shall almost invariably find that it comes from the poisoned fount—bad reading. The press can be a principle of good or evil. For a large, if not for the most part, at the present day, it is a principle of evil; a flood-gate of iniquity; a plague which threatens society with ruin. . . . May God grant that we may recognise to the full this great evil, and do all in our power to remedy it. . . . We shall consider:

I. The evil of Bad Reading.

II. The remedy to be applied.

I. The evil of Bad Reading.

By bad writing I mean anything, whether book, periodical, or newspaper, that is opposed to faith or morals. Works of this kind are evil, because:

1°. They corrupt the religious and moral sense. Without religion, man's life is aimless; without morals, he becomes like the brute beast. . . .

2°. A bad book is a social evil, the worst of all evils. . . .

3°. It is a poison that pleases the palate : *Their wine is the gall of dragons, and the venom of asps, which is incurable.* Deut. xxxii. 33.

4°. It is to the soul what unwholesome food is to the body. . . .

5°. It is a false light—an *ignis fatuus*—by which the intellect is led astray.

6°. It is a devil's drug for hardening the heart. . . .

7°. It is a dire scourge of religion and the Church, since it destroys faith ; of the family, since it, in many ways, undermines the home ; and of the individual, since it robs him of faith, morals and peace. He who deals in publications of this kind is in the greatest spiritual danger, for he is in the fullest sense of the word the devil's agent.

8°. Besides those out and out bad books that corrupt the mind and morals, there are others which hold as it were a mid-way, amongst which we might include a certain class of novels. . . .

Some one may object and say,

1°. Am I not justified in reading what the law allows ?

R. The civil law may allow those publications ; but what you have to look to is the natural and divine law ; and, needless to say, they do not allow you to endanger your soul.

2°. Or one may say, I read *both sides, for and against*, lest I be behind the times. R. (1) You have no right to do so : how easy it is to find an excuse for reading what is bad and dangerous, and, on the other hand, what tedium, to certain persons, the reading of good books brings ! (2) Tell me, when there is question of your health, do you eat what is poisonous or unwholesome ? . . .

3°. Another may say, good and bad books are all the same to me, I feel no harm arising from the latter. R. (1) Are you wiser than the Church, which forbids them ? (2) There is an old saying, tell me your companion and I'll tell you what you are. In like manner, tell me the book you read, and I will tell you what you think and feel. (3) Again, reading is moral food, and just as corporal food is assimilated into the body of him who eats, so moral food is assimilated into the

mind. (4) And, finally, a little learning is not able to answer specious objections ; likewise moderate virtue cannot withstand the dangerous effects of lascivious descriptions.

4°. I read, you may say, for the sake of style. R. (1) Yes, as some say that they go to the theatre for the sake of the music. But you drink in the poison all the same, in fact all the more so when it is well prepared and subtly mixed. (2) Are there not good books which are noted for their perfect style ? Why do you not read them ? (3) And as for style, it can be truly said that the literature of romance at the present day is for the most part lacking in both style and eloquence.

II. What is the remedy ?

1°. Let the rules of the Church be observed.

2°. Let good books be read and propagated.

3°. Catholic libraries should, where possible, be founded and maintained.

4°. Parents should be watchful.

OTHER FORMS.

I. How useful is good reading ! II. How dangerous is bad reading !

A bad book is worse than poison ; worse than a robber ; worse than an evil companion ; worse than a bad tongue, notwithstanding the fact that the latter is, in the words of S. James (iii. 6), *A fire, a world of iniquity . . . which defileth the whole body, and inflameth the wheel of our nativity, being set on fire by hell.*

I. Bad reading is like the tree that was the cause of ruin to our first parents. . . . II. On the other hand, good reading is the tree of life. *It giveth light; and giveth understanding to little ones.* Ps. cxviii. 130.

I. There is a knowledge that is true, and a light that is from God: *With the bread of life and understanding, she shall feed him, and give him the water of wholesome wisdom to drink.* Eccli. xv. 3. II. There is a knowledge and light that is from the devil, the characteristic of which is that a certain amount of truth is mixed with error. Externally it has the appearance of truth and erudition, internally there lurks the lie which is opposed to the word of God. *Why hath God commanded you, that you should not eat of every tree of paradise? . . . No, you shall not die the death. For God doth know that in what day soever you shall eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened: and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.* Gen. iii. 1, 4, 5.

III.

INJUSTICE.

The sin of injustice differs from others in this that not only must it be renounced and detested, but, if committed, restitution must be made. We shall consider

I. Why should Injustice be detested?

II. How can Injustice be repaired?

I. Why should Injustice be detested ?

1°. Because many are damned on account of it. It is easily committed ; it is remitted with difficulty.

(1) It is easily committed : because man, carried away by the desire of enriching himself, is wont to have recourse, for that purpose, to all means, not hesitating to employ those that are unjust. Accordingly, if many temporal matters are handled, injustice easily creeps in.

(2) It is easily committed, if not directly, by theft and rapine, at least indirectly, by fraud and trickery, by deception in commerce and contracts, by deceit in weights and measures, and by the adulteration of goods. . . .

(3) It is remitted with great difficulty : because it is not easily recognised by him who is guilty, it is with difficulty confessed, and there is still greater difficulty in making restitution. . . .

(4) It is not easily recognised : for he who is guilty of this sin readily deceives himself, and persuades himself that there is no sin. . . . Accordingly we should consider well whether in all things we act uprightly and in accordance with equity. And with a view to this, we should ask ourselves, is my intention sincere, do I engage in contracts, in commerce, in affairs committed to my charge, before the eyes of God who will judge me ? Also, have I paid my just debts ? Are all things which I possess such as I can truly call my own, not only before men, but in the eyes of God who will judge me ? . . . Who are to be regarded as unjust ? Are they those only who are commonly known as thieves ? . . .

(5) It is with difficulty confessed ; and the difficulty arises from shame. The devil knows this, and he makes use of it to the utmost of his power.

(6) And it is still more difficult to make restitution. For the sin is not remitted like others, for which contrition and purpose of amendment are sufficient ; in the case of injustice, restitution must be added to contrition ; and this is a difficult thing. The goods of others, if we happen to possess them, seem to pass into our blood, and the parting with them is like shedding drops of blood. . . .

2°. Injustice should be detested, because it is fatal and deplorable in its effects. It takes away peace of soul. . . . the blessing of God . . . and frequently one's character before men. . . . *This is the curse which . . . shall come to the house of the thief, and . . . it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it.* Zach. v. 3. . . . *Better is a handful with rest, than both hands full of labour, and vexation of mind.* Eccle. iv. 6.

3°. Of riches in general S. Scripture says that they are thorns choking the seed of salvation . . . a great impediment to entrance into heaven . . . an allurement into the snares of the devil. See 1 Tim. vi. 9; Matth. xiii. 22, and xix. 23.

4°. What then must be said of riches unjustly acquired? What does the Holy Spirit say? *Neither thieves nor covetous shall possess the Kingdom of God.* 1 Cor. vi. 10. . . . *Thou treasurest up to thyself wrath.* Rom. ii. 5. . . . *You have stored up to yourselves wrath against the last days.* James, v. 3. . . . *Keep thy money to thyself, to perish with thee.* Acts, viii. 20. . . . For avarice, Christ was sold by Judas; and for this same vice many a soul redeemed by Christ is sold to the devil. . . . *Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl in your miseries.* James, v. 1.

5°. Ill gotten gain may well be compared to a baited hook which a fish swallows; or to a snare, or bird-line, by which birds are caught.

6°. The causes that lead to injustice should also be avoided, which are: avarice, prodigality, luxury, ambition of elevating oneself beyond one's station, vanity for fine clothes, for which the price has not been paid, too great a solicitude about temporal goods on the one hand, and, on the other, too little confidence in God, as if the necessities of life would be wanting to those who follow strict justice: *O ye of little faith . . . Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you.* Matth. vi. 33.

II. How can Injustice be repaired ?

By restitution. Of this we shall consider the motives, the manner and necessary conditions, also the obstacles.

1°. Restitution is necessary. *A sin of injustice is not remitted unless what has been taken is restored.* Aug. Epist. 84 ad Maced.

2°. Is it not better to make restitution than to go to perdition with your money ? What would you think of a captain who would prefer to sink rather than throw his merchandise overboard ? . . .

3°. Of what avail will be to you the money you now retain, when you go to the place where Judas and Dives are ? . . . *The riches he hath swallowed he shall vomit up.* Job, xx. 15.

4°. Restore : if you are unable to give back all at the same time, at least begin with a part. Economy must be practised ; nay even you are bound to reduce your state in life, if it has been secured by wrong means.

5°. Do not deceive yourself : God is not satisfied with empty prettexts. . . .

6°. Nor will it do to give to the poor ; you must restore to the owner, if he is known to you.

7°. He who does not do so when he is able remains in mortal sin, and cannot receive absolution. The same is to be said of the man who culpably defers paying his debts, where the creditor demands them. Also of the person who postpones restitution until the hour of death, and leaves it to his heirs to do so.

8°. If you have doubts about anything in this matter, examine your conscience diligently, and make prudent enquiry. . . .

9°. Restore : pluck the thorn from your foot ; eradicate the remorse from your heart ; break the chain, golden though it be, with which the devil binds you. . . .

10°. Put away the vain prettexts that so often present themselves : you say that you must uphold your station in life ; that you must provide for your children. You may succeed in stifling the voice of conscience ; you may be

a regular attendant at church ; you may try to find an indulgent confessor. . . . But remember that God is not deceived. . . .

11°. Restore : those goods not your own cry out to their owner ; they cry to heaven ; they call down on you vengeance and a curse. . . . Do you not hear their voice ? Every time you look on them, or think of them, they say to you : I am not yours. They cry out ; nor have you power to silence their voice, however much you may try. . . . Loud is their voice, nor will it be stilled until justice be done. . . .

12°. Restore : place your salvation above and before all pretexts. Do not wait until you are despoiled by death. . . . Follow the example of Zachaeus : *If I have wronged any man of anything, I restore him fourfold.* Luke, xix. 8.

13°. In this respect there are different classes of persons : some restore nothing ; some restore in part ; some restore all. . . . To which do you belong ?

14°. Perhaps you are afraid of injuring your character by doing so ? There is no danger ; you are not bound to make public restitution ; nor are you bound to make it in person ; in fact there are a thousand ways by which you can do so without hurting your reputation. . . .

IV.

IMPURITY.¹

Would that it were lawful to remain for ever silent about this foul vice ! The Apostle Paul said : *Let it not so much as be named among you, as becometh saints.* Ephes. v. 3. . . . But the sins of many, and the danger to others, forbid us to

¹ See Sermon on *Lust*, p. 80.

be silent. To this in particular apply the words of Isaias : *Cry, cease not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show thy people their wicked doings.* lviii. 1. . . . In regard to it, we shall consider three things :

I. Its turpitude or foulness.

II. Its perniciousness.

III. The remedy.

I. Its turpitude.

1°. The vice of impurity inflicts an injury, so far as sin can do so, on the Holy Trinity : on the Father, whose image in the soul it defiles, blots out, changes into the image of a monster ; on the Son, whose mystic members, consecrated by Baptism and Holy Communion, it drags into the mire : *Know you not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot?* 1 Cor. vi. 15 ; on the Holy Ghost, whose temple it profanes : *Your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost.* 1 Cor. vi. 19. . . . What would you think, if an idol were placed in the sanctuary of the living God? . . . But consider your heart : *Son of man, dig in the wall. . . . Go in and see the wicked abominations which they commit here . . . and behold every form of creeping things, and of living creatures, the abomination, and all the idols.* Ezech. viii. 8 and following.

2°. Let no one say that this sin is light. . . . Can that be regarded light which is mortal, which is always mortal, which, if voluntary and full consent be given, admits, unlike many other sins, of no distinction into mortal and venial? . . . Is it a light thing to defile the image of God? . . . Is it a light thing to drag down the soul, God's noblest work, and make it like to a sow that wallows in the mire, or like to a dog that returns to its vomit? These are strong and expressive words, but they are the words of S. Peter. 2 Pet. ii. 22.

3°. Neither let any one say that God will be indulgent towards it, as He knows the weakness of the flesh. . . . Why there is no sin that God has punished as He has punished this. Recall the history of the destruction of Sodom, and the cities of the plain. . . . Even in the present dispensation, one of mercy though it be, He punishes it ; nor does He reserve, as in case of other sins, His punishments till the time of death ; but here and now He does so, as witness the ruin of health, the loss of fortune, of fame, of honour, and of peace. . . .

4°. Impurity is the *abomination of desolation in the holy place*, that is, devastation and foulness in the sanctuary of the soul. . . .

5°. S. Bernard compares an impure soul to hell, with its fire ever burning, and its worm ever gnawing—by which is meant, the fire of passion, and the worm of corruption. . . .

6°. S. Scripture speaks of this vice with horror : *Let it not so much as be named amongst you.* Ephes. v. 3. . . . *For if you live according to the flesh, you shall die.* Rom. viii. 13. . . . *Murderers, and fornicators, and idolaters, they shall have their portion in the pool burning with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.* Apoc. xxi. 8.

7°. The impure man prefers Barabbas to Christ—that is, the Barabbas of his own passions : *Away with Him, away with Him ;* for us not Him, but our passions. . . .

8°. In fine, this vice is called the bestial sin, for he who commits it assumes the character of a beast. . . .

II. Its perniciousness.

1°. Many are damned on account of this vice ; no other, as Cardinal Toletus says, is so difficult to be eradicated, and none other sends so many victims to perdition. . . .

2°. It impresses the sign, and, as it were, the mark, of damnation on the soul. Damnation and this vice have many things in common ; namely, fire and darkness and confusion

and perturbation of spirit, and the worm ; so that of the impure it can be said, that they *go down alive into hell*. Ps. liv. 16.

3°. It is the beginning of reprobation : for (1) it is easily committed ; (2) once having fallen, one easily relapses ; (3) it is multiplied appallingly, for the least act, if voluntary, is a mortal sin, and may include many species of sin ; (4) the habit is easily contracted ; (5) it is with difficulty corrected and healed : *His bones shall be filled with the vices of his youth, and they shall sleep with him in the dust*. Job, xx. 11. (6) There follow in its trail blindness of intellect, hardness of heart, and despair : *Who, despairing, have given themselves up to lasciviousness*. Ephes. iv. 19.

4°. It destroys the beauty, the health, and the strength of the body. . . . It is poison honied over. . . . It infuses the germs of consumption and slow decay into the bloom of youth. [In this connection we might quote the words of Michael Angelo in reply to the critics who said of the group known as the Pieta, that he made the Blessed Virgin too young-looking relatively to Christ : *Do you not know, said he, that chaste women maintain their freshness far longer than the unchaste. How much more would this be the case with a virgin into whose heart there never crept the least lascivious desire which could affect the body ?*].

5°. It is slavery of the worst kind, cruel, ignominious, and evil begetting, robbing the soul of its peace, its honour, its sense of religion, and destroying all means of liberation. . . .

6°. It begets blindness of intellect. It extinguishes the light of reason, the light of grace, the light of faith, taking away the knowledge of self, of one's dignity, the knowledge of God, and the sense of His presence, the consciousness of the danger in which one lives, and of the sin that is committed. . . . In vain you will say to the impure man, that his character, his health, his soul are set at nought and endangered. . . . His parents may die of grief ; but to him it matters not, he is intent only on following his evil desires.

7°. It is a deadly fire : easily lighted ; terrible and quick to burn ; difficult to be extinguished. . . .

8°. *Man when he was in honour did not understand ; he hath been compared to senseless beasts, and made like to them.* Ps. xlviii. 21. Man becomes as a brute animal ; in particular he becomes like that despised animal that wallows in the mire—needless to say, I mean the pig.

III. The remedy.

1°. In this regard, two classes must be distinguished : those who have not yet fallen ; those who, having fallen, ought to arise. Wherefore, according to the class, the remedy is either preventative or curative.

2°. The preventative remedy consists in watchfulness, flight, prayer, and mortification. *Death is come up through our windows.* Jerem. ix. 21. There is one great remedy that deserves special mention, and that is devotion to the Immaculate Mother of God.

3°. As to curative remedy : *This kind (of demon) is not cast out but by prayer and fasting.* Matth. xvii. 20.

4°. The following considerations should be borne in mind : *To perish once is to perish for eternity. That which delights is momentary, that which torments is eternal. The act of sin passes, but the effect of sin remains.* . . .

5°. S. Jerome used to say : *O infernal fire of lust, whose live coals is gluttony, whose flame is pride, whose spark is evil conversation, whose smoke is infamy, whose ashes is uncleanness, whose end is hell.*

6°. The causes must be removed, which are : intemperance in food and drink, idleness, pride, familiarity with the other sex. According to S. Bernard, impurity might be compared to the chariot of Pharaoh—a chariot which will be plunged into the Red Sea of the fire of hell. Of this chariot the wheels are four : gluttony, drunkenness, pride or luxury, and idleness.

7°. A great remedy is the frequentation of the sacraments. . . . The Blessed Eucharist is *the bread of angels,* . . .

the corn of the elect, and wine springing forth virgins. Zach. ix. 17.

8°. But no remedy will be of avail, unless the occasion of sin be avoided; which avoidance is at one and the same time not only a remedy but an essential condition to one's preservation and cure. Hence when a certain person asked an old anchorite what he was to do to avoid this sin, the latter replied: (1) fly; (2) fly; (3) fly. . . . *Fly fornication.* 1 Cor. vi. 18.

Peroration. These are the four chief gates of hell; if you avoid them, you shall escape perdition, and shall find entrance into heaven and the way of life.—That you do this, I entreat and implore you by the salvation of your eternal soul, and through the blood of Jesus Christ that has been poured out for you.

OTHER FORMS.

I. What kind of sin is impurity? In this matter there is no sin where there is no will; there is venial sin, when the consent is semi-deliberate; there is always mortal sin, when the consent is complete. . . . II. What is its history? How does one become a slave to this vice; and what is the life of such a one? III. What are the consequences.

What is impurity? I. What to the eyes of reason? . . . II. What to the eyes of faith? . . . III. What to the eyes of experience? How far is it a scourge of human society?

Who are the pure and chaste of heart? What are the obstacles to this most beautiful virtue?

I. The chaste of heart can be included under three classes : some are free from temptations ; some feel temptations but conquer them ; some, having been in the mire, have washed themselves in the waters of penance.

II. The obstacles are contained under the following objections, which are usually urged :

(1) I frequent indeed the theatre, and go to dances that are dangerous ; but my state in life, and the society in which I move, compel me to do this. . . .

(2) I possess bad books, and dangerous pictures ; but the latter are works of art. . . . I read bad papers and periodicals ; but I do so for the sake of business or news. . . .

(3) I am solicited, and as a result I sin . . . but I intend to marry the person.

(4) I listen to bad conversation, and encourage it by laughing, I speak bad language, or sing bad songs ; but if I give up these things, people will ridicule me as being silly and squeamish.

(5) I go to dangerous parties, and gatherings, because I am invited ; and if I do not go, I shall be thought eccentric, and shall be turned into ridicule.

(6) I am the father of a family, I am the owner of a public-house, I permit what is wrong to be said and done ; but if I object, I shall lose my customers. . . .

(7) I wear dress that is unbecoming, but it is the fashion, and I cannot give it up. . . .

Conclusion. Consider, O Christian brethren, the beauty of chastity, to which you are called : *For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto sanctification.* I Thess. iv. 7. . . . *The impure shall not possess the kingdom of God. And such some of you were ; but you are washed, but you are sanctified.* I Cor. vi. 11. . . . *Blessed are the clean of*

heart, for they shall see God. Matth. v. 8. . . . They shall be as the Angels of God in heaven. Matth. xxii. 30. O how beautiful is the chaste generation with glory : for the memory thereof is immortal, because it is known both with God and with men. Wisdom iv. 1. Raise your eyes and look up to the Star of Purity, invoke Mary, Virgin, Queen, Immaculate Mother. . . .

PENANCE.

Jesus began to preach, and to say : do penance, for the Kingdom of God is at hand.—Matth. iv. 17.

To save one's soul, to obtain heaven, to escape hell—who is there who does not desire it? But if one desires an end, one must also desire the means that lead to that end. Now the means of salvation, so far as man is concerned, can, in the main, be reduced to *penance*; this is the root from which the tree of salvation springs. . . . There are not a few who are astray as to the kind of penance that is required; there are some who think penance too difficult; and there are others who consider that it can be deferred to some future time. . . . But of these the first are in a state of culpable ignorance; what the others think is an error, a snare of the devil, an impediment to salvation that should be removed.

If you inquire of me what is the way to heaven, I answer it is twofold: the way of innocence, and the way of penance.

The way of innocence is that of the few; the way of penance is the path that the majority who are saved do tread: *Do penance for the kingdom of God is nigh.* This is the message of the Gospel; and, in the main, the sum total of the Christian life.

Therefore, we shall consider:

- I. What is Christian Penance?
- II. Why should it be done?
- III. When should it be done?
- IV. How can it be done?

I. What is Christian Penance?

1°. Passing over other meanings and explanations, we take penance to be that Christian virtue which Christ preached as a necessary condition for salvation.

2°. Christian or evangelical¹ penance, generally speaking, is reparation for sin. It is twofold, internal and external.

3°. Internal penance is *sorrow and detestation for sin committed, with a resolution of sinning no more.* . . . It is called conversion of heart, because by sin man turns his back on God and heaven, and as it were embraces the devil and hell; but by penance he turns again to the Lord his God, as the prodigal son returned to his father. . .

4°. External penance consists in penitential works, by which one satisfies for sin: such as fasting, praying and watching, and such works as we read of in the life of the anchorites. . . . Of the works of external penance, some are voluntary, such as fasting and almsgiving; others are necessary, such as those that are imposed by God, and accepted in a spirit of humility, for example, sickness and trials that are borne with resignation. . .

5°. Either kind of penance, internal or external, is good, and is commended by Christ; but the internal is the more potent, in proportion as the soul is above the body. Also internal penance is the root of external; and without it external penance can be of no avail. . . . Accordingly we shall consider principally internal penance. . .

II. Why should Penance be done?

Because of two evils the less should be chosen; because it is absolutely necessary; because otherwise there is no peace of conscience; because God in His mercy invites us.

1°. *Of two evils the less should be chosen*: for penance must be done either in this life, or in the next; sin must be expiated, here or hereafter; here, by light penance, hereafter, by terrible punishment. . .

¹ Consult theology on this point, also on the virtue of penance.

2°. *It is necessary* : that is to all sinners as an essential means to salvation. For :

(1) *Unless you do penance*, as Christ says in the Gospel, *you shall all likewise perish*. Luke, xiii. 3.

(2) Consider heaven : no sinner has ever entered there except purified by penance. . . .

(3) Think of hell : the damned, whoever they be, perished because they did not do penance. . . . Therefore the sinner has his choice between penance and hell. . . . Which is the better, to be damned, or to do a little penance ? . . .

(4) Nothing defiled can enter heaven. Sin is defilement, which can be cleansed only by penance : *What shall we do, men and brethren ?* Peter was asked, and he said : *Do penance*. Acts ii. 37. . . .

Some one may object and say : men were created by God, are they not the children of God, although they be sinners ? Does not a good father permit his son no matter how bad he may be to remain in his house ? . . . R. God indeed is the father of sinners, so long as they live on earth, and, accordingly, He bears with and admonishes them ; but after death He is a judge ; a judge who, if they be found impenitent, will reject and damn them.

(5) So long as a man goes the way of hell he cannot attain heaven. The sinner is such a one ; and if he wishes to reverse his journeying, it can only be through penance. If a traveller, for instance, once enters on a wrong road, he cannot reach his destination except he turns back. This is exactly the case of the sinner : *Let the wicked forsake his way*. Isaias, lv. 7. The son who turns his back on his father will never again cross the threshold of his native home unless he retraces his steps. . . .

(6) Cut off from the land of his destiny by the channel of sin, the sinner has only one means by which he can return, and that is—the boat of penance. . . .

3°. *Otherwise there is no peace of conscience*.

(1) The conscience of the sinner is ever gnawing, and by its gnawing it says : *Thou art the enemy of God ; the slave of the devil ; thou treadest the mouth of the abyss*. . . .

(2) In vain will he strive to stifle the voice of that conscience by distractions, and by other sins . . . He may succeed for a time, but ever and anon he will hear that clamorous voice, and when it speaks, there is an end to peace : *There is no peace to the wicked, saith the Lord God.* Isaias, lvii. 21. In fact sin is to the conscience what a weight is to a clock : so long as the weight hangs, the clock cannot be still ; neither can the soul that is weighed down with sin be at rest.

4°. *Because God in His mercy invites us.* He does so by word, by works, and above all by His blood. *Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and patience, and long-suffering ? Knowest thou not that the benignity of God leadeth thee to penance ?* Rom. ii. 4.

III. When should Penance be done ?

Needless to say, it should be done *before death*, for in hell there is no remission. *Whilst we have time, let us work good.* Gal. vi. 10. . . . *He swore by him that liveth for ever and ever . . . that time shall be no more.* Apoc. x. 6.

But this is not enough ; it should be done without delay :

1°. *Delay not to be converted to the Lord, and defer it not from day to day.* Eccli. v. 8.

2°. There are a few well-known axioms that should be borne in mind : *The good as soon as possible ; the necessary before the accidental ; an important matter should not be deferred till to-morrow ; the necessary before the useful ; the useful before the pleasing.*

3°. A traveller as soon as he discovers that he is on the wrong road immediately retraces his steps, in accordance with the maxim : *An error should be corrected, the moment it is discovered.* . . . A husbandman gathers his harvest as soon as it is ripe. . . . If a house be discovered to be on fire, no time is lost before extinguishing it. . . .

4°. Perhaps you may say : Later on it will be easier to do penance. R. Why easier ? Will you not later on have this

same occasion of sin to overcome? . . . Yes, and perhaps more difficulty in doing so. . . . Do you think that later it will be easier for you to conquer your passion? Do you not know that as a result of habit passion will strike deeper root? . . . The older the tree, the more difficult to be uprooted; the longer the sickness, the harder to be cured. *It is a proverb: a young man according to his way, even when he is old he will not depart from it.* Prov. xxii. 6.

5°. But you may urge your argument and say: provided penance is done before death, it is sufficient. Accordingly when youth is over, when I have grown old, when I am on the bed of sickness, I will call in a priest, I will make my confession, and I shall be saved. . . .

R. (1) All this is very fine indeed, if only things will turn out according to your wish. But how do you know that this will be so? This much I do know, that hell is filled with people who spoke exactly as you do now. . . . This also I do know, that imaginings of this kind are suggested to you by the devil for your ruin. . . . Let us examine those imaginings a little.

(2) Repentance *before death* suffices. . . . Yes, provided there will be repentance, and provided moreover that it will be acceptable to God. . . . But will the sinner repent? Will his repentance be heartfelt and sincere? . . . And if not, what then? . . . Yes, I know you will quote for me the example of the penitent thief. . . . But what, I ask, of the impenitent thief? Moreover I ask, did the penitent thief receive previously many calls to grace, and refuse them, as you do? That is an essential point. What, if, when called to grace, he said, as you now say, *later on?* . . . Do you then dare to entrust your eternal salvation to the uncertainty of a *perhaps*.

(3) *When I have grown old*, you say. . . . Are you sure that you shall be spared so long? . . .

(4) *When youth has passed*, you say. . . . In other words, when you have given the flower of your life to the devil, you will be so generous as to offer the remnant to God. . . . The heart and body, corrupted and exhausted in the service

of the devil, and then practically dead—what an acceptable offering to God that will be! . . .

(5) *When I am on my death-bed*, you say. . . . Who has told you that you will die in bed?

(6) *When I am near death*, you say. . . . Again I ask, who will give you warning of this? Will you even be disposed to believe those who tell you so? There are many who refuse to believe that they are dying, they cannot realise it. . . .

(7) *I will call in a priest*. . . . Well said; but will there be a priest at hand? Overcome with sickness and delirium, will you be able to do so? And, still more improbable, shall you then get grace to will it? . . .

(8) *I will make my confession*. . . . Will you have power of speech? Will your confession, though you should make it, be a good one? Will that which now appears to you so difficult and full of labour become easier when you are in the grip of sickness and death? . . . God now calls you, and you say to Him: Not yet, O Lord; take away your grace and leave me; I have not yet grown tired of sinning, and of setting your commandments at nought; later on when it suits me, I will call you; then you can come with your grace, and wash me clean, and admit me to your heaven. . . . Those are the sentiments that are so often expressed, if not in word, at least in act. . . . But there are other words, words of significance and meaning, written under the influence of the Holy Spirit as He breathed into the soul of the inspired writer, and the words are: *The death of the wicked is very evil*. Ps. xxxiii. 22. . . . And again: *I will laugh in your destruction*. Prov. i. 26.

(9) *And I shall be saved*. . . . Yes, you shall be, if God wishes to work in your favour a miracle of mercy; but if He fulfils His threats, and refuses to work such a miracle, you certainly shall be damned. . . . For He has said: *I called, and you refused*. Prov. i. 24. . . . And to the Jews who rejected His invitation: *You shall seek me, and you shall die in your sin*. John, viii. 21. . . . Therefore, *To-day if you shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts*. Ps. xciv. 8.

IV. How can Penance be done ?

1°. *Not by halves* : work only half done is not done at all, is particularly true of penance. . . . Not by halves, therefore, but perfectly, whole heartedly, according to the will of Christ. . . .

2°. Perfect penance is that which manifests itself in *heart*, that is in true contrition ; in *word*, that is in sincere confession ; in *work*, that is, in avoiding the occasions, in repairing the wrong done, in amendment of life, as also in expiation proportionate to the sins committed. *Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of penance.* Matth. iii. 8.

3°. Not by halves, not in part, but wholly and completely. . . . There are some who frequently begin, but never advance ; because they repent only in part. They are : those who do not confess all ; those who do confess, but have not sorrow ; those who do not form a firm resolution ; those who do not avoid the occasions of sin, nor take care to remove voluntary impediments ; finally, those who neglect the means proposed by God. . . .

Conclusion.—Do I wish to act thus ? God forbid ! I will be converted not in part, but entirely : *I said, Now have I begun ; this is the change of the right hand of the Most High.* Ps. lxxvi. 11. . . . This very day I will go to confession, which shall be for me the commencement of a new life, the beginning of peace and joy for time and eternity.

But alas ! not all are disposed to speak out thus generously ; they invent excuses for delay, and pretexts for procrastination. Brethren, let us pray for them. And if there be here present any such an unhappy one, I beseech him through the blood of Jesus Christ to have pity on his immortal soul, and to hearken to the voice of the most loving of fathers, who says : *Come ye all to me.* . . .

OTHER FORMS.

I. What are the obstacles to penance? II. What are the defects?

I. How does Christ exhort us to penance? II. How does death? III. How does hell?

The fruits of penance are threefold: I. Expiation. . .
II. Amendment. . . III. Peace and consolation. . .

SACRAMENTAL CONFESSION.

*Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them,
and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.—*

John, xx. 23.

[One or other (or both) of the following introductions might be used]:

I. Since sacramental confession is one of the chief duties of a Christian life, all care should be taken that it be made according to the mind of Him who instituted it.

If you were to know of any act on which your eternal salvation depended, would you not think it proper to give every care to the due fulfilment of it? But there is such an act; one on which your salvation may be said to depend; and that is the act of confessing your sins. Confession then should be properly made; and with a view to that everything pertaining to this important duty should be weighed and considered. Wherefore we shall ask ourselves. . . .

II. (*Another introduction*). Knowing that confession is of so great importance, the devil leaves nothing undone to prevent us making it, or, at least, to lead us to make it badly. That we might the better guard against his insidious devices, it is necessary that we have true notions in regard to its theory and practice. Wherefore, we shall consider:

I. What is Confession?

II. Why must it be frequented?

III. When and how must we confess?

I. What is Confession ?

1°. What do heretics say of it ? They say that it is a human invention, the work of priests. . . . What do the irreligious say ? That it is good indeed, but not necessary for an upright life. . . .

What does the devil say ? That it is too difficult ; that it is an invention of priests, opposed to revelation.

2°. What does Christ, and what does the Church say ? That confession in reality or desire is the only means instituted by Christ for the remission of mortal sin committed after Baptism. . . .

3°. What are the constituent parts of confession ? The act of the penitent, and the act of the priest : the penitent supplies the matter, the priest applies the form. . . .

4°. What is the power of the keys ? (On this point the preacher will consult his theology).

5°. Who is the minister of confession ? What is his power ? What his office ? What his obligations ? . . . (In this connection the preacher might refer to the seal of confession).

6°. What are the parts of penance ? . . .

7°. Who are concerned in this Sacrament ? God, the priest, and the penitent. . . .

8°. By what different names is it called ? It is called the plank after shipwreck ; Baptism of good works (*Baptisma laboriosum*) ; the Sacrament of reconciliation ; the gate of heaven ; the Sacrament of the keys ; the best of medicines, which heals with certainty, which heals promptly, which heals with sweetness ; the certain and assured medicine of the soul, provided the wounds are laid bare : *What the medicine does not touch, it does not heal.* S. Jerome.

9°. What does the sacramental rite symbolically considered stand for ? It is at once a tribunal and a judgment ; but a tribunal and judgment of mercy ; different from a human tribunal ; and different from that which the soul after death shall have to face. . . .

10°. In this judgment we can consider (1) the penitent, or accused, and his obligations ; (2) the judge, his power, and

office ; (3) the sentence, and benefits that flow therefrom.

11°. When and how was Confession instituted? Confession as a sacrament was instituted by Christ ; but considered from the point of view of the acts of the penitent, it existed from the beginning of the world. . . . Even from our first parents God demanded a confession of guilt. See Gen. iii.

12°. Three things in regard to it should be well known : its institution, its utility, the practice of it. . . .

II. Why should Confession be frequented ?

1°. Because it is necessary for salvation for everyone who, after Baptism, has fallen into mortal sin. *Unless you do penance, you shall all likewise perish.* Luke xiii. 3. *Which is the better* (to paraphrase the words of Tertullian) *to carry damnation within your soul or to openly confess ?*

2°. Because the Lord Jesus kindly invites us : *Come to me all you that labour, and are burdened, and I will refresh you.* Matth. xi. 28. . . . He is the good Samaritan, binding wounds, and pouring in oil. Luke, x. 34. . . . He is a father who embraces his prodigal son on his return. Luke, xv. . . . He is the good shepherd who goes in search of the lost sheep.

3°. Because the benefits that flow from confession are immense, to the person who confesses, to his family, and to society : there is peace of conscience, and a healing of the diseases of the soul, and a stilling of raging passions. . . . It is most useful for the just, because it brings an increase of grace ; while to the sinner it means the severance of the bonds of sin, and the acquiring of the freedom of the sons of God. . . . In it too direction in the way of life is obtained. . . . What with the remission of sin, the restoration of merit, the quieting of the qualms of conscience, why are not men better ? Because of defect of disposition, defect of sincerity, or of too rare approach to this great Sacrament.

4°. Because confession effects three great changes: it changes God towards the sinner; it changes the sinner; and it not only changes but heals the wound of sin. . . .

5°. Because we are exhorted to do so, by the blessed in heaven, the damned in hell, the Church and all the faithful on earth. . . .

6°. Because the devil is opposed to it—and what he is opposed to must be good—so also are men of evil.

7°. Because there are no obstacles or impediments to confessing. Those which are alleged and seem to stand in the way are purely imaginary, for instance: (1) shame of declaring one's sins (in this connection the preacher might discuss the seal of confession); (2) the labour of preparing; (3) the difficulty of renouncing sin, and of avoiding the occasions; (4) the gravity and too great number of one's sins.

8°. Because it is not difficult, provided the practice be kept up. . . .

9°. Because the confessor is your friend, your physician, and the best of fathers. . . .

III. When and how must we confess?

1°. When? As a matter of precept, at least once a year. . . . In danger of death. . . . After a fall into mortal sin. . . .

2°. When? As often as a man needs spiritual medicine. And who does not need it? He alone who suffers from no infirmity.

3°. How often? *Frequently*, just as a sick man sends for a doctor, and uses medicine. . . . You may say to me, perhaps, that those who frequent confession are no better than others; and that you yourself felt no better than before. . . . If indeed there be any truth in this statement, the reason for it is not far to seek. . . .

4°. How should one confess? . . . To put it briefly, *properly*, that is, according to the mind of Christ who instituted the sacrament. The confession should be good,

not sacrilegious. . . . Remember that confession and conversion are not synonymous—are not words of the same meaning. . . .

5°. Who confess badly? . . . R. They who come from custom, rather than from a desire to be freed from sin. They who think it sufficient to obtain absolution in any way they can. They who conceal sins, or do not think of amending their lives. . . . *Sacrilegious silence* is terrible in its effects, and is founded on the most foolish of reasons. . . .

6°. Who confess well? They who come with a sincere desire of obtaining pardon; they who can say: *My heart is ready, O Lord.* . . . They who make known their conscience without reserve, and detest their sins from their heart. . . . They who break off the proximate occasion of sin. . . .

7°. What is the general method of confession? R. There are certain things to be observed before confession; certain in the confessional; and certain things after confession. *Before confession*: two things should be borne in mind (1) I go to Christ Himself, (2) I am going perhaps to my last confession. . . . Two things should be prayed for: (1) light, and (2) sorrow. . . . Two things should be done: (1) one's conscience should be examined, (2) contrition should be elicited. . . . *In confession*: (1) one's sins should be declared simply, (2) admonitions should be listened to attentively and quietly. . . . *After confession*: (1) one's penance should be fulfilled, (2) admonitions and resolutions should be put in practice.

Peroration.—I conclude in those words of our Blessed Lord: *Come to me all you who labour.* . . . *Take my yoke upon you, and you shall find rest for your souls.* Come, beloved brother in Christ, come to the Lord your God with your whole heart, and your whole soul, and He will say to you, as He said to Mary Magdalen, *Thy sins are forgiven, go in peace.* Luke, vii. 48, 50.

OTHER FORMS.

I. How great a blessing is confession? How should it be used? *How great a blessing*: it is medicine, it is freedom, it is consolation. If by the bed of a sick man a doctor capable of healing every disease should stand; if to one bound in prison and condemned to death, a pardon were offered; if to one crushed beneath a heavy weight, instant help were forthcoming—what, in each case, would be the feeling of the person thus liberated? Even such deliverance confession, in the spiritual order, brings to the sinner.

How should it be used?

1°. *Without delay.* If you had enough money in your coffers to pay your debts, and should nevertheless go on postponing doing so, and putting your creditor off with empty promises, what would he think of you? . . . Why then do you delay in the spiritual order? . . . Or when will there be an end of this postponing?

2°. *It should be used properly.* (1) Remember that this may be your last. (2) Confess as you would to Christ Himself. (3) Extend your contrition to all your sins. (4) Prepare the words in which you will confess, for the sake of clearness and brevity, and that you may omit nothing. (5) Beware of scruples.

I. What renders confession difficult? II. What makes it easy? . . .

I. What does God do in confession? He confers an unspeakable blessing. II. What does the devil do? He plots that he might get you either not to confess at all, or to do so badly. . . . III. What do men do? They are divided into three classes: 1°. Some listen to the devil's voice, and obey it; 2°. Some partly listen to it, and confess with tepidity and without fruit; 3°. others scorn his suggestions, and as a result confess with profit to their souls.

Four tribunals can be distinguished: I. the civil; the natural, that is, the tribunal of conscience; the sacramental, that is, confession; the final or supreme, that is, the tribunal of God, before which each one, at the hour of his departure hence, must stand.

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE.

I will recount to thee all my years in the bitterness of my soul.—Isai. xxxviii. 15

[The preacher might make use of one or other of the following exordiums].

I. A good confession must be preceded by an examination of conscience. . . . This is omitted by some ; by others not properly gone through : either because they do not think it necessary, or do not know how to go about it, or deem it impossible or too difficult. Now let us have clear notions on the subject. On the one hand, it is necessary ; on the other, it is not impossible, neither is it troublesome. But we must know how to make it. With a view to this, we shall reflect on the following points :

II. There are some who say they wish to go to confession, but are terrified by the thought of examining their conscience. I propose to remove this difficulty, by showing how a conscience, even the most perplexed, can easily be examined. Wherefore I propose to you the following considerations :

I. What is meant by an examination of conscience, and why must it be undertaken.

II. How can it be done ?

III. What practical rules can help us ?

I. What is an examination of conscience ?

It is a recalling of our sins with a view to confessing them. . . . There is an examination of *devotion*, which takes place daily, at night, for the elimination of lighter vices and

faults ; a practice which is most useful. . . . But here we consider only the examination that is necessary for confession.

And why, you may ask, is it necessary ?

1°. Because the Council of Trent has laid it down : *It is necessary for penitents to tell in confession all the mortal sins which after a diligent examination of conscience they recall.* Sess. 14, c. 5.

2°. Because sins must be declared not in a general way, but singly and distinctly, *with their number and species.* . . . Accordingly the penitent must know them.

3°. Because we must have sorrow for our sins, and must form a resolution not to sin again ; and with a view to this we must try to know our sins.

4°. That we may declare all, and thus secure peace of conscience.

5°. That we may not prolong our confession by trying to recall in the tribunal what we have been guilty of. . .

6°. That we may not expose ourselves to the danger of an invalid confession, which could easily arise from a lack of examination of conscience.

II. How can we examine our conscience ?

R. Sincerely, diligently, methodically.

1°. *Sincerely*, that is, with a true desire of knowing all one's sins as they appear to the eyes of God.

We must wish *to know all* : even the hidden sins of thought. . . . There are some persons who wish not to be able to recall all, so that they may not be bound to confess and avoid them.

We should wish *to know all*. Then let us not say : in such and such a matter, for example in regard to justice and purity, I need not be so scrupulous. . . . This is simply a case of deceiving oneself. And what is the good of it ? Do you think that we can deceive God ?

2°. *Diligently*, that is, with care, having taken a reasonable amount of time ; by which I mean such time as a prudent person would give to an important matter.

3°. *Methodically*. . . . There are various methods, according to the various kinds of obligation, and of sins committed.

(1) One might examine oneself on the common obligations of a Christian, the duties of one's state in life or—what is the same—on the ten commandments of God, the precepts of His Church, the seven capital sins, the particular obligations of one's state, the persons visited, and the places frequented.

(2) One's conscience should be examined for sins of thought, word, deed, and omission.

(3) Also as to time, place, and persons :

As to time : What sins have I committed on ordinary days, at morning, at noon, at evening ? What sins on Sundays and feast days ?

As to place : What sins at home ; what in the house of others ; what in the house of God ; what in the streets, or other places ?

As to persons : What persons and places have I visited ? How did I act there ?

(4) And it will help the memory, if we ask ourselves what sins we have committed in regard to God, in regard to our neighbour, in regard to ourselves.

III. What practical rules can help us ?

1°. Should a " Table of Sins " (as found in prayer-books) be used ? . . . R. Yes, it may be a help to read it once ; but it is by no means necessary.¹ It is better, if possible, to dispense with it.

2°. Special attention must be paid to the three following considerations : (1) What are the sins with which one's conscience is most burdened ? (2) How has the purpose

¹ There are different opinions on this point. The subject is well discussed by Spirago : *Method of Christian Doctrine*, page 435.—Translator.

of amendment of the last confession been observed ? (3) What is one's predominant vice or passion, and what sins have sprung therefrom ?

[Here the preacher might with advantage go through the commandments of the decalogue, and the commandments of the Church, simplifying and popularising his theological knowledge].

CONTRITION AND PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT.

Be converted to me with all your heart. . . . And rend your hearts, and not your garments.—Joel. ii. 12, 13.

A contrite and humbled heart, O Lord, thou wilt not despise.—Ps. l. 19.

OF the three acts of the penitent, contrition, confession and satisfaction, contrition is by far the most important. It is, as it were, the soul of penance, the others the body. . . . If it be wanting, the others avail nothing ; if it be perfect, there will be nothing wanting : or rather, whatever may be wanting in the other acts will be supplied by the perfection of contrition.

Sin is a serpent which has the will as its head. Crush the head of a serpent, and it dies. In like manner, crush the perverted will, and sin is conquered. And this is what contrition does.

To use another figure, contrition is, in a manner, the very fount of conversion ; when this fount is opened, all the other works of penance easily flow.

And yet another figure, contrition might be regarded as the root of confession. And as in a plant all vitality comes from the root, so in confession all efficacy springs from contrition : destroy the root, and the plant dies ; take away contrition, and the sacrament is null and void, if not sacrilegious.

Therefore of the two acts which precede confession, examination of conscience and contrition, the more important is contrition : examination of conscience must be diligently made ; but contrition must more diligently be elicited.

With a view to doing so properly and with ease, we shall consider the following points :

I. What is Contrition, and why is it necessary.

II. How must it be elicited ?

III. What are the signs of true Contrition.

I. What is Contrition, and why is it necessary ?

1°. *Contrition, which is the most important act of the penitent, is sorrow and detestation for sin committed, with a resolution of sinning no more.* Council of Trent. Sess. 14, ch. 4. . . . Let us consider each point of this definition.¹

2°. Contrition must have four qualities or characteristics. It must be (1) *true and interior*, that is, it must be a detestation of sin with the whole heart ; (2) it must be *supernatural*, that is, from a motive of faith ; (3) it must be *universal*, that is, extending to at least all mortal sins, not even one excepted ; (4) it must be *supreme*, that is, a detestation for sin above that of every other evil.

3°. There are two species or kinds of contrition : *perfect* and *imperfect*. . . . What is the difference between the two ? . . . (Consult Theology).

4°. There are two constitutive parts of penance : *detestation* in regard to the past, *resolution* in regard to the future. The resolution is necessary ; without it there can be no true contrition ; without true contrition, there can neither be a good confession, nor salvation. . . . It often happens that the resolution is not real, that it has only the semblance of reality, and is but a vain and empty wish. Such of course is worthless.

5°. What then are the qualities or characteristics of a good resolution ?

It should be (1) *serious*, one which says not merely *I would wish*, but *I do wish* ; (2) *efficacious*—by which we

¹ Consult theology on Penance.

mean a determination to apply the means and avoid the occasions ; (3) *generous*—that is no dallying or deferring, but a resolution which says, *I will arise and go to my father*, a resolution which says, *Lord, what do you wish me to do?* (4) *confident*—such as is expressed in the words, *I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me.* Phil. iv. 13.

Why should contrition be elicited.

1°. Because it is necessary. *Unless you do penance you shall all likewise perish.* So long as you remain rebellious, so long as you refuse to lay down arms, how can you hope to gain pardon? . . . You have your choice, penance now with fruit, or later punishment with despair: *Saying within themselves, repenting and groaning for anguish of spirit . . . therefore we have erred.* Wisdom v. 3.

2°. Because it is efficacious in obtaining pardon. When David said *I have sinned*, the Prophet replied: *The Lord also hath taken away thy sin.* 2 Kings xii. 13. No matter how enormous, no matter how multiplied your sins may have been, they will be washed away in the waters of penance. Think of David, and Mary Magdalen, and Peter, and the penitent Thief. . . .

3°. Because the divine goodness lovingly invites us: *Turn ye to me, and I will turn to you.* Zach. i. 3. . . . *Return, O Israel, to the Lord thy God: for thou hast fallen away by thy iniquity.* Osee. xiv. 2.

4°. Because to acknowledge and repair one's guilt honours a man. To sin is human; to persevere in sin is cowardice and malice; to repent of sin is the part of virtue.

II. How must contrition be elicited?

1°. From the heart: not merely from the lips, by the reciting of a certain formula. This includes two things: (1) that the penitent sincerely recognise that he has sinned; that he say, as did Daniel in speaking for his people: *We have sinned, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly,*

and have revolted. Dan. ix. 5. The meaning of which can be reduced to the sincere straightforward words, *Lord, I have sinned.* (2) That he seriously wish to repair the evil, by saying: no matter what the price, I am determined to wipe out the stain of guilt, and be reconciled with my Creator. *I have sworn and am determined to keep the judgments of thy justice.* Ps. cxviii. 106.

2°. The grace of contrition must be asked in prayer. . . .

3°. The penitent should reflect on the motives of contrition which have to do (1) partly with heaven, which has been lost, with heaven the Lord of which and my Father has been offended; (2) partly with hell, which my sins have merited, with hell where the victims of my sins of scandal lie howling; (3) partly with Calvary, where the blood of Jesus has been poured out for me, and which I have trampled under foot; Calvary, where I see my Redeemer with arms outstretched to embrace me the prodigal son, and with head bowed to give me the kiss of peace. . . .

To these considerations we might add *death and judgment: Remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin.* Eccli. vii. 40; as also the goodness of God on the one hand, and my ingratitude on the other. . . .

4°. The obstacles must also be removed, which are: (1) the occasions of sin; and (2) lack of confidence in divine help. . . .

III. What are the signs of true contrition?

1°. Tears and sobbing are not necessary, neither are they certain signs. . . .

2°. But I tell you what is the sign of true contrition, it is the honest recognition of our sin. We should act as does the traveller who realises that he has gone astray. He freely admits his error, he does not try to deceive himself, but immediately turns back. . . .

3°. A sure sign is change of will: hatred of that which heretofore we have wrongly desired. For example, take the case of a man who is invited to a banquet, the viands

of which he likes because they are inviting. But some kind friend whispers to him that they are poisoned, and what is the result? A complete change of will. So too should we act; those worldly pleasures seem inviting, but they are poisoned with the poison of sin; and if we value our eternal salvation we must avoid them. . . .

4°. Another sure sign is a firm resolution of changing one's life. For instance, when a person says to himself: I want this confession to be valid; I want to lay a tranquil head on my pillow, and go to sleep with my heart at peace with God. Up to this I have been a blasphemer, and an impure man; I now mean to be pious and chaste. *I have sworn, I am resolved. . . . I have said: I now begin.*

5°. Another sign is a sincere accusation of oneself; wherein the heart, like water, is poured out before God in the person of the confessor. . . .

6°. So also is the fleeing of the occasion of sin. Was the occasion a bad book? It will be burned. Was it a person? He or she will be avoided. Was it a place? It will be deserted.

7°. Finally, the surest sign that sorrow has reality is a complete change of life: a change, for instance, by which, to mention a few cases, the impure become chaste, and the irascible of temper become meek. . . .

Conclusion. To such a sorrow then as will bring us honour here and salvation hereafter, let us open our hearts, as did David, and Peter, and Augustine. . . . Let us sow in tears, and we shall reap in joy. . . .

And should any one say to me, such contrition, so necessary, and so precious, I indeed desire, but I do not know how to acquire it, I reply, if you have real compunction of heart, you have as a fact already acquired it. In the words of Augustine, *if I wish to be the friend of God, thereby behold I am so.* . . . Do you desire it with a true will? Ask of God, and He will give it to you. . . . O Lord, grant me the spirit of true compunction: behold, O Lord, my heart is prepared, my heart is prepared, O Lord! Have mercy on me according to thy great mercy. . . .

THE MERCY OF GOD.

The Lord is sweet to all : and his tender mercies are over all his works.—Ps. cxliv. 9.

The mercies of the Lord I will sing for ever.
—Ps. lxxxviii. 1.

IF it is necessary for us to meditate on the justice of God, it is equally so to consider His mercy. . . . His justice instils a salutary fear ; His mercy encourages to a holy confidence and love. . . . Justice deters us from sin ; but mercy draws us to the feet of God, and there, by bonds of love, holds us captive in His service. . . . Justice with thunder-clap strikes the obdurate heart ; but mercy, like fire that liquifies, softens it. *No heart so hard, none so stony, none so made of iron, that the fire of love is not capable of softening.*

Therefore we shall consider the mercy of God.

Did we know that mercy we should never say, as did Cain : *My iniquity is greater than that I may deserve pardon.* Gen. iv. 13. . . . Because the mercy of the Lord is infinite ; and, though my iniquity be an abyss, the mercy of the Lord is a depth still more profound ; for of a truth, *His tender mercies are over all His works.* Ps. cxliv. 9. That mercy is truly divine, and as such cannot be conveyed in words ; it is an immense ocean, wherein the sins of the repentant sinner are swallowed down and hidden like grains of sand. . . .

Did we know it, we should immediately cast ourselves at the feet of the Lord ; for, knowing it, it would be impossible for us to resist such love, which so tenderly invites us. . . .

Did we know it, we should for ever detest sin ; because it would not be possible to offend any more a God who is so loving a father. . . . We should for ever devote our-

selves to His service ; because we should feel a desire surpassing that of all things earthly to serve so good a God.

In order then to know, though it must necessarily be in a small way, something of the mercy of the Lord, we shall consider it as it is revealed in His words and works.

I. How has God manifested His mercy in words ?

II. How in works ?

I. God manifests His mercy in words,

through the mouths of the Prophets, through that of His Son, through the Apostles, and through the Church.

1°. Moses in his canticle, after the passage of the Red Sea, says to God in the name of the entire people : *In thy mercy Thou hast been a leader to the people which thou hast redeemed.* Exod. xv. 13.

2°. He sends Prophets that they may preach His mercy : *Thou therefore, O son of man, say to the house of Israel : As I live, saith the Lord God, I desire not the death of the wicked : but that the wicked turn from his way, and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways : and why will you die, O house of Israel.* Ezech. xxxiii. 10, 11. . . . *Come and accuse me, saith the Lord : if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow.* Isai. i. 18.

3°. He sends His Son from on high that He might visit us in the bowels of His mercy. Luke, i. 78. . . . He the benign Redeemer not only speaks but breathes mercy, both in the meek form He assumes, and in the words that He uses :

(1) He speaks mercy by His very appearance. . . . He might have come as a mighty King or ruler, and yet what was the form that He did assume ? Was it not that of benignity and sweetness, that He might draw us to Him ? He came as a helpless babe ; as He grew to manhood He worked with His hands and helped His Foster-Father ; He

became like to us in all things save sin ; and of Him we can truly say, *He is our brother, and our flesh.* Gen. xxxvii. 27.

(2) And He speaks mercy by word, not once only, but again and again : *Come to me, all you that labour, and are burdened, and I will refresh you.* Matth. xi. 28. . . . *Suffer the little children to come unto me.* Mark, x. 14. . . . And the mercy which He utters in words likewise breathes from His eyes and face. . . . Where is the sinner that ever approached Him and was repulsed ? When did He ever use even harsh words towards a repentant sinner ? . . .

How accurately were fulfilled the words which Isaias spoke of Him ! *Behold my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved in whom my soul hath been well pleased. I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall show judgment to the gentiles. He shall not contend, nor cry out, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. The bruised reed he shall not break ; and smoking flax he shall not extinguish . . . and in his name the gentiles shall hope.* Matth. xii. 18-21.

And if at any time He manifests indignation, it is because His work of mercy is interfered with. To give a few examples : *Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them ? And turning he rebuked them saying : You know not of what spirit you are. The son of man came not to destroy souls, but to save.* Luke, ix. 54-56. . . . *My house is the house of prayer : but you have made it a den of thieves.* Luke, xix. 46.

I am the good shepherd ; the good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep. John, x. 11.

See also Luke, xv. 1 and following. And Matth. xviii. 22 and following. *I say not to thee till seven times ; but till seventy times seven times, etc.*

I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly. John, x. 10. . . . *God sent not his Son into the world, to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by him.* John, iii. 17. . . . See also Luke, x. 33.

And not only does He call the erring ones, but He rouses them that sleep ; He follows after those that fly from Him, He gently forces them, heals them, and carries them on His

shoulders, that He might restore them to the fold, sparing no labours, hesitating at no sacrifice, even pouring out His blood, that He may restore them to life and happiness.

(3) And well has the Church learned the message of mercy that He brought,—a message re-echoed by the Apostles—for, as at the beginning, so to-day, her words are: *The Lord dealeth patiently for your sake, not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance.* 2 Peter, iii. 9.

II. The works of mercy.

In the Old Testament as well as in the New, His works of mercy stand as a monument worthy of His words.

1°. In the Old Testament we have such examples as: His dealing with our first parents; the flood; His long suffering in regard to the cities of the plain; the incident of the Red Sea; His dealing with the Israelites in the desert; His mercy to David, and many others—each a stone in the monument of His mercy.

Adam sinned, but God did not cast him into hell, as He cast the rebel angels; but He *brought him out of his sin*. Wisdom, x. 2. He did not send the deluge immediately on a corrupt world; but He gave a warning of a hundred years, during which the ark was being built, and all that time there was much preaching of penance. When about to wipe out Sodom and the other cities of the plain, He appeared through an angel to Abraham, and granted all that Abraham begged for, nay even, He was willing to spare an entire nation of sinners, if only a small number of just could be found amongst them. In order to deliver His people from the slavery of Egypt—which is a type of the slavery of sin—He worked many miracles, even to the parting of the waters of the Red Sea—which miracle foreshadowed the blood of Jesus. And rebellious and ungrateful though the Israelites were, He fed them with manna in the desert; and, when they were bitten by fiery serpents, He caused them to be cured by looking on a serpent of brass—a type in a striking manner

of Christ on the cross. David made confession of his sin in the brief phrase, *I have sinned against the Lord*, and forthwith the Prophet Nathan was authorised to say to him: *The Lord also hath taken away thy sin.* 2 Kings, xii. 13.

The Prophets without ceasing admonished sinners, and called them to penance. And if the city of Jerusalem at last forced Him to execute the vengeance which it had so richly deserved, it was only after its destruction had long been foretold in case it did not do penance. And when the unhappy city had been destroyed, the Lord, in the person of Jeremias, cried in compassion over its ruins: *Jerusalem hath grievously sinned, therefore is she become unstable.* . . . *The Lord is good to them that hope in him, to the soul that seeketh him.* . . . *For if He hath cast off, he will also have mercy, according to the multitude of his mercies.* Jeremias: Lamentations.

Jonas was sent to Ninive to announce that that city would be destroyed after forty days; but the Ninevites repented, and the wrath of the Lord was appeased. . .

Of the divine mercy there are likewise many figures: Joseph pardoning and embracing his brothers (See Gen. xlv.); and David weeping over his son Absalom, rebellious though he was: *My son Absalom, Absalom my son; would that I might die for thee, Absalom my son, my son Absalom.* 2 Kings, xviii. 33.

2°. In the New Testament we have so many examples that it simply breathes with His mercy. What need to seek further examples than the stable of Bethlehem, and the hill of Calvary? *God so loved the world, as to give his only-begotten Son.* John, iii. 16.

What Christ described Himself in words, that He truly was in works: He not only waited for the sinner, and postponed punishment, and kindly received him, and called him, and sought him; but He laboured for him, He suffered for him, and He died for him.

Why did the Son of God leave His Father's home? *For us men, and for our salvation.* . . . Suppose you were languishing in prison without hope, and that the son of a king at the risk of his life liberated you and led you forth.

would you not think him deserving of your confidence and affection? . . .

The whole life of Jesus was one continuous work of mercy ; but by way of concrete examples we have the following :

His interview with the Samaritan woman. John, iv.

His treatment of the woman taken in adultery. John, viii.

His kindness to Mary Magdalen. Luke, vii.

His consideration for Zacheus. Luke, xix.

His kindness towards the Canaan woman. Matth. xv.

His weeping over Jerusalem, and heart-piercing cry of pain that Jerusalem would not hearken to Him : *Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent to thee, how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not.* Matth. xxiii. 37. Luke, xix.

He said to Judas : *Friend, whereto art thou come ?* Matth. xxvi. 50.

He cast a glance at Peter, and Peter *went out and wept bitterly.*

To the penitent thief he said : *This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.* Luke, xxiii. 43.

Even for them that crucified Him He prayed : *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* Luke, xxiii. 34.

Look at His wounds and His blood ! What greater proof of love and mercy ? The open lips of the bleeding wounds cry out, and move the hardest hearts. Behold the arms outstretched to embrace us, the head bent forward to give us the kiss of peace and reconciliation—the whole form of the Crucified is the personification of love and mercy. . . .

Conclusion. Therefore, brethren, let us run, let us rush, to the arms of mercy of our God, saying, in the words of the Prodigal : *I will arise, and will go to my Father.* Luke, xv. 18.

PARTICULAR FORMS.

I. Why does God show such mercy to the sinner?

Because He is so good; because He is still the father of the sinner; because He knows what hell is, and wishes to save his children from so great an evil.

II. How ought the sinner to respond to such goodness?

I. How does God invite the sinner?

II. How does the hardened of heart respond?

III. How does the penitent of heart reply?

Are there any reasons why one should doubt of God's mercy?

I. Is the number of one's sins a reason? You say, perhaps, that you have spent many years in forgetfulness of God, and that the number of your sins has daily increased.

II. Is their enormity a reason? You have committed, you say, most grievous sins, of blasphemy, of scandal, of sacrilege.

III. I have been too ungrateful, you say; God has heaped His favours on me from infancy, and still I—what have I done?

The most vivid picture of God's mercy is the parable of the Prodigal Son: in which we can consider his going abroad, his return, his reception. . . .

I. His going abroad. What led to it? (1) His youth, inexperience, passions, and rashness. . . . (2) His irreverence towards his father: *Give me*, said he, *the portion of my inheritance*, etc. . . . (3) His love of independence. . . . (4) His turning away from God, and works of piety:

He went abroad. What does that mean? He spent the portion of his inheritance; he lived luxuriously. . . . What was the sequel or result? Hunger, unsatisfied craving, an abyss of vice, slavery. Of all men he was the most miserable, *and no man gave unto him.* . . . II. His return. (1) What was the occasion? Solitude . . . meditation . . . comparison of his state with that of those who were faithful. . . . (2) What kind was his resolve, or what acts led to it? Confidence and humility. . . . (3) How did he fulfil his resolve? With promptness, generosity, and humility: *Make me as one of thy hired servants.* Luke, xv. 18. . . . III. His reception: (1) not only did his father receive him but *running to him he fell upon his neck, and kissed him:* (2) and, forgetting his ingratitude, he heaped favours on him, *because, as he said, this my son was dead, and is come to life again.* . . .

Note.—In giving explanations of this kind it would be well to intertwine them with the parable. The parable might first be explained, and then the spiritual application made to each part, principally under the two headings: (1) Who is this son so ungrateful to his father? (2) Who is this father so forgiving and loving towards his son? . . .

Also a distinct sermon on the mercy of God could be woven out of the three points: I. the parable of the Prodigal Son; II. the example of Judas; III. the example of Peter.

THE CHRISTIAN.

FIRST DISCOURSE.

GENERAL VIEW.

He gave them power to be made the sons of God.—
John, i. 12.

*Behold what manner of charity the Father hath
bestowed upon us, that we should be called, and should
be the sons of God.—1 John, iii. 1.*

SINCE by the grace of God I am a Christian, it is necessary that I know what a Christian should be, all the more, because for me glory and happiness can consist only in this character and in this name.

I. What is a Christian ?

II. What is a perfect Christian ?

III. How does one become a Christian ?

IV. How should a Christian act ?

V. How is he in danger ?

VI. How does he become safe ?

VII. How is he rewarded ?

I. What is a Christian ?

In order to give an answer to this general question, many things must be considered. What does the meaning of the word Christian convey? What is his origin, and what his end? What is the example set up for him? What are the duties and obligations of a Christian life? What are the means and helps thereto? What is the glory attached? What is the dignity of the state? How are Christians distinguished?

1°. What does the meaning of the word Christian convey? . . . It does not mean merely to be a man, a rational creature, immortal, made to God's likeness; but the word superadds to this nobility the grade and character of special dignity. . . . Christian dignity is as much above man's ordinary natural dignity of human being, as the precious gem that sparkles in the crown of a king is above a common stone. . . . To be a Christian is to be a *disciple of Christ*; it is to be of the number of those whom the Lord taught in Judea, and over whom, at His ascension, He raised His hands in benediction. . . .

2°. A Christian is also a member of Christ, a soldier of Christ, the good odour of Christ, an adopted son of God, and as such the brother and co-heir of Christ. . . . To be a Christian is likewise to be a son and member of the Church, a live stone in the edifice of the Church, a branch engrafted on the vine, a man sanctified and called to a holy life. . . . To be a Christian is, in a certain spiritual sense, to be a priest, a king, another Christ. . . . It is, in the words of the Apostle, to be anointed with the chrism of Christ: *He that confirmeth us with you in Christ, and that hath anointed us, is God; who also hath sealed us, and given the pledge of the spirit in our hearts.* 2 Cor. i. 21, 22.

3°. In the Christian there are two beings: the external man, and the internal or invisible man. . . . Likewise there is a twofold principle of activity: grace on the one side, and nature, prone to evil, on the other. Which two principles or sources of activity are also called *spirit* and *flesh*,

the celestial and the earthly man, the new man and the old. . . .

4°. What is the origin and what the end of a Christian ?

(1) A twofold origin must be distinguished, *remote* and *proximate*. The *remote* origin is the grace of God, and His mercy ; the *proximate* and formal origin is regeneration in Baptism : *As little fishes*, says Tertullian, *we are born in water, nor can we be saved except by remaining in water* (Bapt. c. i.)—by which he means the water of penance, of humility, and of grace.

(2) The end of a Christian is to be found in his vocation to celestial destiny. But with a view to it, a Christian in this life is destined for sanctity and the beginning of heavenly happiness ; but, at the same time, to sorrow, to labours, and to tribulations. . . . After death he is destined for heaven and consummate happiness. Also the end of a Christian is that he be the son of God, the brother and friend of Christ, a son of the Church, the temple of the Holy Ghost, and an heir to the kingdom of heaven.

5°. Who is the exemplar of a Christian ? R. None other than Christ Himself, in His life of labour, of sorrow, and of glory. . . .

6°. What are the duties and obligations of a Christian ?

R. He is bound to fulfil the obligations which he contracted in Baptism : to renounce the devil and adhere to Christ. *What have you to do with the pomps of the devil, which you have renounced ? . . . You have professed to renounce the devil ; with not only men but God and His angels as witnesses, you have said : I renounce. Renounce him then not only in word, but in act.* S. Aug. De Symb. ad catech. i. 4, c. 1. . . . He has his duties, as disciple of Christ, as soldier of Christ, as brother of Christ, and, finally, as member of Christ. He ought to *believe* what Christ teaches, and *do* what Christ commands. . . . He ought to embrace Christ, to obey Christ, to conform to Christ. . . . He ought to be united to Christ as head, and to the members of Christ, by charity. . . . He ought to fulfil all duties, domestic, civil, religious. . . . He ought to believe firmly, to obey Christ and the

Church, to imitate the example of Christ and His Saints, to frequent the sacraments, to hear mass well, and to perform the other offices that Christ and Christ's spouse, the Church, impose on him.

7°. What are the means and helps thereto ?

R. To speak generally, they are two : the grace of God, and our own co-operation : *Not I, but the grace of God with me.* 1 Cor. xv. 10. *I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me.* Phil. iv. 13. . . . There are three means of which special mention must be made : prayer, the sacraments, and resolute fight. There are particular means innumerable which the Church supplies, and which the daily course of life casts in our way : *To those that love God, all things work together unto good.* Rom. viii. 28.

8°. What is the glory of a Christian ?

R. Not in riches, and earthly splendour ; but to live up to his religion, to please God, to imitate Christ, and bear what the world deems the reproach of following Him : *Our glory is this, the testimony of our conscience.* 2 Cor. i. 12. . . .

9°. What is his dignity ?

S. Leo (Serm. 1 de Nativ.) puts it well when he says : *Know, O Christian, thy dignity ; having become a participator in the divine nature, do not by base conduct return to former vileness.* . . . The Christian excels in dignity the worldly noble, the rich, the learned, the warrior who takes cities, and even a king. . . . His dignity, founded on divine adoption, is sacerdotal, is regal in God's kingdom. . . . And he bears the insignia of his dignity, both internally and externally : internally, by the character or mark of Baptism, and the likeness to God, impressed by grace on his soul ; externally, by the sign of the cross, by his patience, and other divine virtues, which are his arms as a soldier of Christ. . . .

10°. How are Christians distinguished ?

R. There is the Christian in reality, and the Christian only in name ; the one who is a Christian before God, and the one who is such only in the eyes of men ; there is the good Christian, the bad, and the tepid ; there is the perfect and the imperfect

Christian—in every case, the former being the glory of the Church, the latter her humiliation and her shame. . . .

II. What is a perfect Christian ?

1°. He is one who cleaves to Christ, and follows His example, who bears the impress of Christ's image : *Everyone shall be perfect, if he be as his master.* Luke, vi. 40.

2°. Not only he who embraces the *state of perfection*, but also, and especially, he who strives to attain the *perfection of his state*. . . . There are two kinds of Christian perfection : the one of *counsel*, which consists in observing what are called the *evangelical counsels*, and which requires a special vocation ; the other of *precept*, which consists in observing the commandments, and which applies to all the faithful : *Be you perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect.* Matth. v. 48. This is the perfection of one's state, by which each one is bound to fulfil the duties of that state, according to the precepts of the Gospel.

3°. The perfect Christian may also be defined as one who avoids evil and does good ; who eradicates from his soul the roots of vice, and sows there the seeds of virtue.

4°. Likewise he who complies with the will of God—by fleeing what God forbids, doing what God commands, suffering what God imposes.

5°. He who guards and sanctifies his tongue : *If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man.* James, iii. 2.

6°. He whose heart is full of love for God, and his neighbour : *Above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection.* Col. iii. 14.

7°. He who is holy in mind and body : in all the faculties of his soul, in all the senses of his body, and in all the works of his life. . . .

8°. He who has a pure intention in all things—praising God in adversity, and humbling himself in prosperity. . . .

9°. He who loves the cross of Christ, and what the cross stands for—humility, patience, charity. . . .

10°. He who is led by the spirit of God, who is full of, and animated by, the spirit of Christ, according to the words of S. Paul : *I live, now not I ; but Christ liveth in me.* Gal. ii. 20. *Whosoever are led by the spirit of God, they are the sons of God.* Rom. viii. 14.

III. How does one become a Christian ?

1°. By the grace of God, and one's own co-operation—the grace of God acting internally, co-operation manifesting itself externally in labour and patience. God forms the Christian character seminally in the sacraments ; man is expected to form it educatively, that is, by development through good works, until he brings it *unto the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ.* Ephes. iv. 13.

2°. Like a plant, it grows by degrees, drawing its vitality and food from the roots of humility, needing care and cultivation, and at length rendering the ground (the soul) on which it grew, and which otherwise would be sterile, a garden of paradise worthy of the Lord.

3°. One becomes a Christian by becoming both a disciple and soldier of Christ : a disciple in hearkening to and fulfilling the precepts of His master, docilely and perseveringly ; a soldier, by not only assuming the uniform and insignia, but by taking up arms, and becoming an adept in their use—the arms of prayer, which he will be called on to use in the battle-field of life.

4°. The moulding of a Christian soul might in some respects be compared to the painting of a picture, or the chiselling of a statue. In both cases an ideal is followed. There is, however, a difference : the picture or statue represents only externally the ideal in the artist's mind, whereas, in the case of the soul, the likeness is essentially internal, and manifests itself externally only in its effects. . . . It might also be compared to an edifice that rises gradually from its foundation : *Be you as living stones built up, a spiritual house.* 1 Pet. ii. 5. . . . *Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the*

chief corner-stone: in whom all the building, being framed together, groweth up into an holy temple of the Lord. In whom you also are built together into an habitation of God in the Spirit. Ephes. ii. 20, 22.

5°. Again we ask, *how can one become a Christian?* As all the saints did, by a good use of the means which Christ instituted and left to His Church.

6°. Through the purgative, illuminative and unitive way—that is, through sorrow for, and elimination of, sin (purgative); through meditation on Christ and the truths He propounded (illuminative); and, as a result, through union with Him (unitive).

7°. In a word, through mortification of the old man, and strengthening of the new.

IV. How should a Christian act?

1°. Not according to the laws and principles of the world, but according to the precepts of the Gospel. . . He should avoid the works of the devil, and follow the teaching and example of Christ.

2°. He should look not to the present, but to the future life. . .

3°. Nevertheless he should not neglect temporal affairs, he should even prudently look to them, always, however, putting the eternal before them: *Seek first the kingdom of God and his justice.* Matth. vi. 33.

4°. Not for himself, but for God. . . Not seeking the things that please, but rather the things that are necessary. . . Not looking to what the world teaches, and persuades by its example; but what Christ set forth in word and work. . . By separating the precious from the vile; and, by the wand of pure intention, changing dross into silver and gold. . .

5°. In all things the Christian seeks the will of God, and strives to fulfil it.

6°. He sanctifies his whole life—the works, the duties, and the crosses, of which life is composed. . . He sanctifies all his days, his youth as well as his old age. . .

7°. He sanctifies his state in life, avoiding defects and dangers, fulfilling his duties to the very letter, and bearing patiently such adversities as may cross his path. . .

8°. He works, he prays, he endures, he suffers.

9°. He serves God, fervently, joyfully, perseveringly.

10°. Externally he performs his human duties in a human way, but internally all his acts are permeated with the Christian spirit, they are influenced by faith, hope, and charity. . .

V. How is he in danger ?

1°. Danger lies in negligence, in ignorance, in rashness, as also in pusillanimity, and presumption, in face of trials.

2°. In too great solicitude about corporal necessities.

3°. By slipping gradually in small things. No one becomes perfect, and no one becomes bad, of a sudden. . . He that despises small things shall fall by little and little. . .

4°. Through lack of foundation : *The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon the house, and it fell, and great was the fall thereof.* Matth. vii. 27. Or on account of defective root : *When the sun was up they were scorched ; and because they had not root they withered away.* Matth. xiii. 6.

5°. Why, if a Christian fall, is his ruin so great ? Why is it greater than the ruin of those who are not Christians ?

6°. Howsoever firmly founded the citadel of Christian sanctity be, it can, nevertheless, be stormed. But at the same time the storming can be attempted with success only when there is lack of vigilance, when there is negligence about summoning the necessary aid, and when courage fails—when the defender loses sight of the significance of the words, *The Lord is my helper ; I will not fear what man can do unto me.* Ps. cxviii. 6.

7°. The great dangers are scandals, temptations, passions, human respect, evil companions, bad books, weak-mindedness and sadness, and laziness. . .

VI. How is one preserved safe ?

1°. By piety, work, and patience.

2°. By vigilance, flight, prayer and meditation.

3°. By diffidence in oneself, and confidence in God.

4°. By listening to sermons, by the sacraments, and by turning afflictions to good account.

5°. By sanctifying the Lord's day, and by working conscientiously during the week. . . .

6°. By following the direction of one's confessor, and by pious reading. . . .

7°. By devotion to the B. V. M. ; by alms-giving, and other good works ; by becoming a member of a confraternity or sodality.

VII. What is the reward ?

1°. A happy life . . . a precious death . . . a glorious eternity. . . . Happiness in the present life can be found only in the liberty, and the light, that come solely to the children of God. . . .

2°. The reward of crosses and afflictions—strange words, perhaps someone may say, but those who endure them for Christ's sake know what is meant : *Such as I love*, says the Lord in the Apocalypse, *I rebuke and chastise*. Apoc. iii. 19.

3°. As Christ, the B. V. M., and all the saints were rewarded. . . .

4°. Of that reward they taste the beginning in life ; they feel it copiously at death ; they shall experience its perfection at the resurrection. . . . And for this perfection of reward, which will be eternal, they shall not have long to wait : *Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me*. Apoc. xxii. 12.

5°. And not only will it come quickly and liberally, but we have God's word for it that it will likewise come as a *just* reward, as the fulfilment of Christ's promise. What the Apostle says of himself applies to every Christian who follows Christ's teaching and example : *I have fought a good fight, I*

have finished my course, I have kept the faith. As to the rest there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord the just judge will render to me in that day: and not only to me, but to them also that love his coming. 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. And also he says: I reckon that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us. Rom. viii. 18.

Conclusion. For a sermon on the Christian life, no more apt conclusion can be found than the exhortation of the same Apostle: *Therefore laying aside every weight and sin which surrounds us, let us run by patience to the fight proposed to us, looking on Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, who having joy set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and now sitteth on the right hand of the throne of God. Heb. xii. 1, 2.*

THE CHRISTIAN.—(*Continued*).

SECOND DISCOURSE.

PARTICULAR VIEW.

Rejoice in this, that your names are written in heaven.—Luke, x. 20.

Who are those whose names are written in heaven? They are Christians—you all who through the grace of God are Christians. . . . Therefore, the Lord bids you to rejoice. . . . But Christians are often sad, you may say, or they place their joy in worldly things. Yes indeed, but that is because they forget, or do not realize, that their names are written in heaven ; in other words, because they have not sufficient appreciation of their dignity, their duty, and their reward. Wherefore we shall consider :

I. What is the dignity of a Christian ?

II. What his duty ?

III. What his reward ?

I. What is the dignity of a Christian ?

1°. It is that which he acquires in Baptism. In *Baptism* I say, because thereby he is made a Christian, and is separated and distinguished from the unbaptized. . . . In Baptism he becomes a Christian, not before : He is not a Christian from birth, but only through the *waters of regeneration*. To

this ineffable origin of the Christian can be adapted the words which Isaias spoke of the nativity of the Divine Word, *Who shall declare his generation.* Isaias liii. 8. . . . The dignity which he acquires is (1) adoption into the sonship of God, and (2) co-option into the family of God and Christ. Let us reflect on those words :

(1) Adoption: man becomes the adopted son of God, just as Christ is His Son by birth. What a dignity, and what a change ! The soul disfigured by the image of the devil is reformed and changed into the likeness of God ; which change is effected by the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity. The Father says : *This is my beloved son*, and inscribes the name of the baptized in the book of life. The Son impresses His image on him. The Holy Ghost infuses the life of grace into his soul, breathing into his face the breath of life, by which he becomes a man *from heaven, heavenly.* 1 Cor. xv. 47. . . . No wonder that S. Leo cried out : *Know, O Christian, thy dignity, and, having become a sharer in the divine nature, do not by degenerate living return to your former vileness.*

(2) Co-option into the family of God, which is the Church, the congregation of the faithful : *You are no more strangers and foreigners ; but you are fellow-citizens with the saints, and the domestics of God.* Ephes. ii. 19.

Of this family Christ is the head, and we are the members.

And He always remains in the midst of the family : *Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.* Matth. xxviii. 20. . . . He remains in a twofold manner, in person, and through his representatives : in person in the Blessed Eucharist, through His representatives, in the Pope and Bishops of the Church. . . . Wherefore, *O Christian, know thy dignity.* . . .

2°. But if we be the sons of God, how does our nobility appear ? The children of earthly kings are easily recognised ; but where are the marks of our dignity ?

R. The glory of the children of God does not in this world appear to the eye, except by their morals. The image of God which is impressed on their soul is invisible, and,

while they live, is, as it were, hidden beneath a veil from mortal eyes ; but it can be seen by angel eyes : *Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God, and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be.* 1 John, iii. 2. . . . Even here, however, the world gets a glimpse of its reflected ray in their holy living : *In the midst of a crooked and perverse generation . . . you shine as lights in the world.* Philipp. ii. 15.

II. What is the duty of a Christian ?

That he be true to the obligations which he contracted in Baptism :

1°. They who are the sons of God should live as becometh the sons of God—that is according to the example and teaching of Christ, in other words, according to the Gospel. . . .

2°. And what is meant by living thus is summed up in the promise of Baptism, whereby we undertook to renounce the Devil, his works and pomps, that we may follow Christ. . . .

3°. And following Him is not difficult. To be sure many a battle must be fought ; but we are given the arms of prayer, and the sacraments are always available. . . .

III. What is the Christian's reward ?

He is given a portion here ; he will receive the fulness in eternity.

1°. *On earth :* (1) There is the peace that surpasseth riches and earthly pleasures : *My peace I leave you, my peace I give you,* are words the truth of which the just know and feel. . . . But likewise Christ has left the cross to His disciples. Yes, but with it sweetness and consolation, full and flowing over—in prayer and the sacraments . . . and if any one say that he does not experience this consolation, it is because he does not observe Christ's law, or does not apply the means that are offered, or because, perhaps, he has a false notion of the consolation of the Lord, *the God of all comfort, who comforteth*

us in all our tribulation. 2 Cor. i. 3. The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but justice, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Rom. xiv. 17.

(2) On earth there is also, as springing from peace, the foretaste of future happiness; consisting in the liberty and light that are the portion of the children of God. . . .

2°. *In eternity, the glory of Paradise: Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven. Matth. v. 12.*

Conclusion. Baptized as we are into the name of Christ, let us try to realize the greatness of our vocation, as also the significance of the words, *Rejoice that your names are written in heaven.* Let us live as Christians, lest by sin we should blot out our names from the book of heaven. And living as Christians ours shall be the Christian's hope: *The hope of Christians is the resurrection of the dead* (Tertul.).

THE CHURCH.

Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my church.—Matth. xvi. 18.

We were all baptized into one body. . . . You are the body of Christ, and members of member.—1 Cor. xii. 13, 27.

A CHRISTIAN is not only a disciple of Christ, but also is a member of His family, that is, the Church. . . . The holy Church, founded by Christ, is, as it were, a family spread over the whole world, of which Christ Himself, in the person of His Vicar, the Roman Pontiff, is the Father, and of which all Christians are children; with appropriateness then they are known and called brothers in Christ.

It behoveth therefore that a Christian should know himself, should know his dignity, should know his obligations, should know the Church of which he is a member. That Church is so beautiful, so glorious, that no human tongue can adequately convey an image of it. That Church, the prophet Balaam, while gazing on the camps of Israel, saw in vision, and under the influence of the Holy Spirit exclaimed: *How beautiful are thy tabernacles, O Jacob, and thy tents, O Israel! As woody valleys, as watered gardens near the rivers, as tabernacles which the Lord hath pitched, as cedars by the water-side.* . . . Num. xxiv. 5.

Would that I could remove the veil that you might contemplate the Church of Christ with your own eyes! But since this is impossible, I must be content with words. And in putting before you what the Church is, I pray God that, whilst I speak in words, which can only strike you externally, He, by His Spirit, may reveal to you internally that which you in faith profess, the *one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church*, with its wonderful constitution, its majesty, its maternal

love and solicitude for its children, and its many traits which, all and each, argue it to be divine.

We are entering on a subject that is large and comprehensive, but we shall try as far as we can to consider it under three heads :

I. What is the Church ?

II. What does the Church do for us ?

III. What return should we make ?

I. What is the Church ?

This question in its wide sweep contains many particular questions, for instance : (1) What is meant by the Church ? (2) What are its names and symbols ? (3) What was its institution, and what its end ? (4) What is its social constitution—its power, its head, and its members ? (5) With what prerogatives is it endowed, and by what signs is it known ? (6) What is the true Church of Christ, or, in other words, how does the Catholic Church prove itself to be the Church of Christ ? . . . This latter question, however, we shall pass over as it is of a polemical or controversial nature, and in speaking to Catholics there is no necessity for discussing it. . . . We shall consider each point :

1°. The Church is : (1) The society of the faithful of Christ ; (2) The society of the baptized faithful, who profess the same faith, are bound by the same sacraments and sacrifice, and are united under the Vicar of Christ, the supreme Pontiff and Bishop of Rome.

2°. The foregoing definition is that of the Church as it appears on earth, and as considered in a strict sense. If, however, it be viewed universally, and considered as embracing the mystic body of which Christ is the head, then it can be defined as, *the human race as united to Christ as head, and constituting with Him a mystic body or mystic family.*

In this latter sense the Church is *one and three*: one in fatherhood (in the unity of Christ as head), and three in brotherhood. Of this brotherhood there are three classes, those on earth, those in purgatory, those in heaven; from which we get the well known division of the Church *militant*, the Church *suffering*, and the Church *triumphant*. The three might be regarded as branches of the same tree. Or better still, as the three periods in God's harvest—the harvest as yet green and growing, the harvest ripe and reaped, the harvest gathered into God's barn. . .

3°. The Church is Christ's spiritual kingdom, analogous to a temporal kingdom. Christ founded a kingdom which He called the kingdom of heaven and His Church: *From that time Jesus began to preach and say: Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. . . And Jesus went about . . . preaching the Gospel of the kingdom.* Matth. iv. 17, 23. . . *Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church. . . And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.* Matth. xvi. 18. This kingdom Christ said *was not of this world*, that is it was unlike earthly kingdoms, *not sprung from this world, and not having the goods of this world for its end*; but sprung from heaven, and leading thereto. Established, however, in this world, it uses the things of the world as means. Hence Christ's reply to Pilate: *Pilate called Jesus and said to him: art thou the king of the Jews? Jesus answered: My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would certainly strive that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now my kingdom is not from hence. Pilate therefore said to him: Art thou a king then? Jesus answered: Thou sayest that I am a king.* John, xviii. 33 and following.

4°. The Church is the kingdom of Christ, analogous to civil kingdoms, but at the same time different in many respects. It has its king, namely, Christ; the viceroy or representative of its king, the Roman Pontiff; the governors of its provinces, the bishops; ministers of lesser rank, the priests; while its citizens are the faithful throughout the world. . . It

differs, however, by reason of its origin, its end, and its limitless domain.

In this kingdom there was established, and there exists, a threefold power: the power of teaching, the power of administering the sacraments and external rites, and the power of governing and making laws. . . .

In this kingdom there are two classes of citizens, the one ruling, the other ruled: hence the distinction into the Church *teaching* and *ruling*, and the Church *hearing* and *obeying*. Or, to express it in other terms of the same distinction, one part is known as *clerical* and the other as *lay*.

The clerical portion of the Church is distinguished into many grades, and comprises, among others, the two orders, secular and religious, which, differing only in details, might be regarded as distinct regiments of the same army. . . .

5°. The Church is the army of the Lord, whose supreme ruler is Christ, its commander on earth the Roman Pontiff, its adjutants bishops, priests the subordinate officers, and the faithful are the military.

If, however, we enquire what is the difference between this and an ordinary army, we shall find that in many points it is a striking one, notably in the nature of the battles to be fought. . . .

6°. From another point of view the Church is the *family* of the Lord. In this family there is one father, Christ, there are many brothers, namely, the faithful, who as children adhere to Christ their father. . . . But how, it will be asked, is there but one Father? Are not priests all called by that name? R. (1) Although many appear to be fathers, yet there is only one Father of the Christian family, who in wonderful manner multiplies Himself in His priests: *I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you.* John, xiv. 18. *Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.* Matth. xxviii. 20.

(2) Because all members of the Church, being bound together, depend on Christ—the laity depending on the priests, the priests on the bishops, the bishops on the Pope, and the Pope on Jesus Christ. The Church, therefore, is

like to a golden chain, let down from heaven to earth, of which the first link is in the hands of Christ. . . Let each one ask—Am I a shining link in this chain?

And for His family the Father has laid a table, and the bread thereon is the bread of life.

7°. Again the Church is a sheep-fold, under one shepherd, who leads His flock to the pastures of doctrine and the sacraments, whilst at the same time He protects them from wolves. And of this flock He has a special solicitude for the lambs, whom, with twice repeated commission *Feed my lambs*, He entrusted to Peter.

8°. The Church is the *garden* of the Lord, wherein fruit-bearing trees (the faithful) are planted; its cultivation is carried on through ecclesiastical rule and ministry; and the Holy Spirit by His grace supplies the rains, the zephyrs, and the sunshine.

9°. The Church might also be regarded as the *house* or temple of the Lord—its walls (of living stones) the faithful; its perpetual foundation, Peter and his successors; its columns, the bishops and the other orders of the hierarchy; and its altar Christ Himself.

10°. And the Church is the *mystic body* of the Lord, animated by the Holy Spirit; of this mystic body, the invisible head is Christ; the visible head the Roman Pontiff; its members the faithful, all and each, as united amongst themselves, and, in union with the priesthood, constituting one whole. . . And this mystic body, like the natural body of Christ, should, through suffering and death, pass to a glorious resurrection. . .

And as in the natural body so likewise in the mystic body, there are two kinds of members—the living, sound, healthy, and the separated, dead, decayed. . .

The life of this mystic body is grace; its heart or centre of life, the Blessed Eucharist; its food, the sacraments; the light of its eyes, preaching and instruction; and the raiment wherewith it is clothed, the splendour of the Church's ceremonial. . .

11°. The Church is the *spouse of Christ, and our mother*. She has begotten each one of us, she nourishes us, she loves us, she crowns us with a crown of honour and glory—and if she does not always succeed, it is not her fault but ours, for she at least strives to do so. . . . And, fruitful as the vine, she is a spouse of many children, who *as olive plants are round about her table*. See Ps. 127. . . . A spouse whose sons come from afar, and whose daughters rise up at her side. See Isai. lx. 4. . . . Such being our mother, shall we not love her? How cruel and unnatural are unworthiness and ingratitude!

12°. And she is a queen, *standing on the right hand in golden garb surrounded with variety*, a queen who walks through the earth, *doing good and healing all who are oppressed*. See Acts x. 38. . . . Wherever she sets her foot she takes away error and vice and the miseries that follow in their train; she sows the seed of truth and virtue; while from her footprints spring flowers of sweetness and fruits of beneficence. *How beautiful are thy steps in shoes, O prince's daughter!* Cantic. vii. 1. . . . *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of one that bringeth good tidings, and that preacheth peace; of one that sheweth forth good, that preacheth salvation, that saith to Sion: Thy God shall reign.* Isai. lii. 7.

13°. The Church is the *boat of Peter, bearing Christ*. And with Him in the boat, it is sure to reach the destined harbour of safety.

14°. The Church is called by many names and symbols: (1) the image of heaven, (2) gate of heaven, (3) the beginning of heaven. And it is depicted as a mother in the flower of youth, having on her head a shield, with a cross in her left hand, a chalice in her right, and with her eyes looking to heaven.

15°. Finally, the Church is the wheel of the glory of God that was shown to Ezechiel. Ezech. i. Which represents the different nations subdued by the Gospel, and bound to the yoke of Christ: *This was the vision of the likeness of the glory of the Lord.* Ezech. ii. 1.

II. What does the Church do for us ?

In other words, what is the Church's work on earth, especially in regard to us ?

1°. It fulfils its mission, by (1) preserving the deposit of Faith, (2) dispensing the means of salvation, and (3) by standing as the pillar and ground of truth in the midst of a restless, changing world.

2°. Its mission is a continuation of Christ's mission : *As the Father hath sent me, I also send you.* John xx. 21. That is, to save souls, to seek the lost sheep ; likewise, to labour, to suffer, to fight, to triumph.

3°. The Church, like Christ, is for all generations and all places, doing good to men, and blessing the Most High—offering Him the incense of praise and a Sacrifice worthy of His name.

4°. Like Christ too, the Church is the light of the world, as also the gate, and the way. . . . It is *the tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.* Apoc. xxii. 2.

5°. The Church, throughout the world, sows the seed of Christ, spreads the fire of Christ, and diffuses the good odor of Christ. And it does so through many tribulations, its characteristic being that the more it is persecuted the more redolent of Christ it becomes—it is like to a lighted thurible that is shaken.

6°. Towards me, and each one of us, the Church is as a mother to her child : she has given me true life ; she tenderly loves me ; she guards and defends me ; she educates me ; she clothes me ; she heals me when I am sick, and raises me up when I have fallen ; she consoles me in sorrow ; she leads me back when I go astray ; she rescues me when I am shipwrecked ; she will strengthen me when I come to die ; and when I pass through the gate of death, she will follow me with supplications for eternal rest to my soul. . . . That the Church has been, and will be, to me ; let me pause and ask, what am I to her ?

7°. Again (for we must consider her from many points of view) she supplies me with light and food—the light of

doctrine and discipline, and the food of the sacraments. She opens all the treasures of her love and riches for me; and if only I hearken to her voice, and do what she bids me, she confers on me the peace and joy that surpass understanding, and such as the world cannot give: *Who is the man that desireth life, who loveth to see good days? Turn away from evil and do good.* Ps. xxxiii. 13, 15. . . . *My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: that grace may be added to thy head, and a chain of gold to thy neck.* Prov. i. 8. . . . *Then shall her (wisdom's) fetters be a strong defence for thee, and a firm foundation, and her chain a robe of glory. For in her is the beauty of life, and her hands are a healthful binding. Thou shalt put her on as a robe of glory, and thou shalt set her upon thee as a crown of joy.* Eccli. vi. 30, 31, 32.

III. What return should we make to her?

1°. God forbid that we should repay her with ingratitude and contempt, so as to make her cry out in bitterness: *I have brought up children, and exalted them; but they have despised me.* Isai. i. 2.

2°. But we should pay her the respect that loving children render to the best of mothers—love, reverence and obedience.

3°. We should come to her aid when she needs us; we should defend her when she is attacked; we should be her joy and crown to contemplate when she is sad. . . .

4°. We should make diligent use of the helps she offers us, by listening to her admonitions, by attending her divine services, and by using her sacraments. . . .

5°. We ought to gladden the heart of our mother by our morals, which should be those of children worthy of her, particularly by fraternal charity, by mutual edification, by the odor of good example, and by purity of soul. . . . Pure souls can be likened to gems shining on the regal robe of our holy Mother Church; sinners, on the other hand, are

as so many smudges and stains. . . Let each one ask himself in the secrecy of his heart, which am I?

6°. The Church is a queen standing on the right hand in seamless, golden garb, marked with variety of colour. Who are they who stain that garment; who rend it asunder; who contribute to beautify it? They, respectively, who commit venial sins; they who sin mortally; they who lead pure and upright lives. . .

7°. *A wise son maketh his father glad; but a foolish son is the sorrow of his mother.* Prov. x. 1. Who are those sons who gladden the heart of their mother? . . Who make her sad? . . Sinners, especially those who give scandal.

8°. How are the children of the Church to be classified? . . There are the negligent and those who dishonour her, the hostile and the rebellious. On the other hand, there are the obedient, those who honour and defend her, and those who are prepared to give and sacrifice all they have, even life itself, in her defence. . .

9°. To which class do I belong? Or to which class am I prepared henceforth to belong? . . And if I have made up my mind, what are the motives of my piety towards her to whom I owe so much? . .

10°. What shall be the future glory of the children of the Church in the day of her joy and exultation? Sacred Scripture answers the question: *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand be forgotten. Let my tongue cleave to my jaws, if I do not remember thee; if I make not Jerusalem the beginning of my joy.* Ps. cxxxvi. 5, 6.

SPECIAL HEADINGS.

I. The Church is the best of mothers. . . II. Her goodness notwithstanding, she has disobedient children whom she feels bound to correct. . . III. Yes, she has even rebellious children who try to disgrace their mother. . . And even these she, a loving mother, tries to win back. . . IV. We as dutiful children will love her the best of mothers, and will observe her precepts. Doing so we shall go into life eternal ; but the rebellious into everlasting fire. . .

I. What do we find in the Church ? The Word of God, the example of Christ, the sacraments, her hierarchy, the communion of saints. . . II. How should we use those graces, those gifts, those privileges ? With diligence and with gratitude.

I. What do we owe to the Church ? Do we not owe everything ? . . What have you that you have not received through the hands of the Church ? . . Nor is there anything that we, infants, can do without our mother. . . II. What shall we render to our mother ? . . Shall we not act as loving children to a tender parent ? . .

THE DUTIES OF A CHRISTIAN.

My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, that I may perfect his work.—John, iv. 34.

We entreat you . . . that you do your own business.—1 Thess. iv. 11.

EACH one has a work to do, and that work is named his *duty* : by which we mean the series of obligations of which human life is composed. To fulfil one's duty is, in the words of the Holy Spirit, to realize one's destiny : *Fear God, and keep His commandments : for this is all man.*—Eccle. xii. 13.

One's duty is a something holy : it is what the holy will of God demands of a man, and which is to be put before all other considerations. . . .

It is the one thing necessary. Luke, x. 42. If man fulfils it, he is blameless before God, in his conscience, and before all men.

To follow the line of duty is at once the sum and substance of wisdom.

In regard to it account must be rendered on the day of judgment. I shall not be asked, was I rich, or learned ; but simply this, did I do my duty, did I fulfil my mission. Like Christ, his model, every Christian ought to be able to say : *I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.* John xvii. 4.

Would that our sole ambition, and sole aspiration were *to finish the work that the Father gave us to do !*—that is, those duties for which He sent each one of us into the world.

Let us therefore ask ourselves :

I. What are the duties of a Christian ?

II. How are they to be fulfilled ?

1. What are the duties of a Christian ?

1°. They are variously distinguished :

(1) By reason of the subject : into common and particular.

(2) By reason of the object, into duties towards God, towards the Church, towards ourself, our family, our neighbour, and towards social authority.

(3) By reason of time : into daily, weekly, and yearly obligations.

(4) By reason of age : into the duties of youth, of mature life, and of old age.

(5) By reason of state or position : into duties of parents and children ; of masters and servants ; of merchants and traders ; of magistrates and officials ; of priests and soldiers ; of the sick and infirm, as well as of those who minister to them. . . .

2°. What are common, and what are special duties ?

(1) Common duties are those that pertain to all Christians, and which spring from Baptism, wherein the baptized renounced Satan and was inscribed as a disciple of Christ. Hence the double obligation, to avoid sin and keep the law.

And do you ask what sins are to be avoided ? All, especially mortal sin.

And what law is to be observed ? The law of God and the Church. . . . The law of Christ, as our example in patience, in humility, in charity. . . .

(2) Special duties are those that arise from a particular state or position of which we shall speak later.

3°. What are daily, weekly, and yearly duties ?

(1) Daily duties—for instance : morning and evening prayers, grace before and after meals ; and the daily taking up of one's cross.

(2) Weekly duties : the sanctification of the Sunday, and the observance of the Friday abstinence.

(3) Yearly duties : observance of the fast, and fulfilment of the Paschal communion.

4°. What are the duties of youth, of mature years, and of old age?

(1) The young are bound to avoid the dangers of being seduced; to devote themselves diligently to the formation of their character by study and labour; likewise to try to ascertain, and then follow, their vocation or calling.

(2) Those of mature years who already occupy a certain state are bound to sanctify that state: *Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.* Matth. v. 48. . . . They ought to give good example to the young, and to guard against too great solicitude about temporal matters: *Seek first the kingdom of God and all these shall be added unto you.* Matth. vi. 33.

(3) Those advanced in years should give themselves in a special manner to piety, and to prepare themselves for death.¹

5°. The duties of various states:

(1) Husbands and wives are bound to mutual love, and the other duties of married life.

(2) Parents² are bound to have for their children a love that is internal, efficacious, and well ordered; they are bound to educate them in body and soul—the latter, not less by example than by instruction. . . .

(3) Children³ owe their parents filial piety—and filial piety is a ray that has three reflections, love, reverence, and obedience, all three to be rendered internally as well as externally.

(4) Brothers and sisters should have for each other a mutual love, not merely of the ordinary kind, but a special, or, as it is called, *fraternal* love. Likewise they should help each other in regard to the necessities of life, not only in extreme, but likewise in grave necessity.

(5) Masters are bound to treat their servants kindly; to instruct and correct them; and to give them just wages.

(6) Servants are bound to render their masters reverence, proper service and obedience, and fidelity.

¹ Cf. Example of Mathathias and Eleazar, 1 Machab. ii. 49 and following, 2 Machab. vi. 18.

² See sermon. p. 116.

³ Ibid., p. 125.

(7) Masters and teachers owe to their pupils love and good example, likewise they should correct them, and impart to them sound teaching.

(8) Pupils, on the other hand, owe to their teachers, love, reverence, and obedience.

(9) *Citizens* are bound by the natural and divine law to render respect and obedience to their lawful civil superiors.

(10) *Judges, lawyers* and all engaged in forensic affairs are bound by special obligations of justice.

(11) *Physicians and surgeons* are bound to possess (a) sufficient knowledge and skill ; (b) are bound to apply diligence proportionate to the gravity of the cases committed to their charge ; (c) and to take care to give notice in case of those in grave danger that the sacraments may be conferred in time.

6°. *The rich* should remember that before God they should regard themselves as dispensers rather than possessors of their wealth ; they should take heed to avoid the dangers that attach to riches ; and should pave the way to heaven by alms : *Make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity, that when you shall fail they may receive you into everlasting dwellings.* Luke, xvi. 9.

7°. *The poor* should remember that Christ was poor . . . and that great riches are in store for them in heaven, if they imitate Christ in patience, in labour, and in holiness. . .

8°. *The infirm* should remember that the time of sickness is a precious and solemn time to a Christian : then they should give themselves to patience, to resignation, and to piety, and should take care to prepare themselves to meet immediate death. . . Those, on the other hand, who minister to the sick should show great and unwavering charity ; should give edification to the afflicted ones under their care ; and should see that they receive the sacraments in time and becomingly.

II. How are the duties of a Christian to be fulfilled ?

1°. *Exclusively*, by which I mean before, above and beyond all other things. Reason teaches this, and Sacred Scripture

enforces it: *Render an account of your stewardship.* Luke xvi. 2.

2°. *Accurately*: (1) that is, diligently, and not in a perfunctory manner; for it is the work of God, and God is both inspector and judge. . . (2) *accurately*, that is, in proper time, and place, and with the thoroughness that the work demands.

3°. Without regard to the example of others. *Everyone shall render account to God for himself.* Rom. xiv. 12. *Let everyone take heed how he buildeth. . . If any man build . . . gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble: every man's work shall be manifest; for the day of the Lord shall declare it.* 1 Cor. iii 10, 12, 13.

4°. *Constantly and perseveringly*, that is, by conquering laziness, and difficulties, not once or twice, but as often as they occur; and not merely for a certain time, but for so long as God wishes. . .

5°. *Joyfully*, that is, with love for the duty imposed, with love for the state assigned us, having in mind that such is precious in the eyes of God. . .

6°. *In a spirit of faith*, that is, by bearing in mind that nothing in the world can compare with this duty, seeing that God demands it; that beneath the husk of outward difficulty there lies concealed the precious kernel of eternal reward.

7°. *In a spirit of wisdom*—the wisdom that sees sanctification in the fulfilment of ordinary daily duties. . .

8°. *With a pure intention*: not to please men, not for temporary gain, but to fulfil the holy will of God. . .

9°. *According to the example of Christ*, who sought nothing in this life, and thought only of the work which He was sent by His Father to accomplish; who, while not disdaining the work of a carpenter, still said: *My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, that I may perfect his work.* John, iv. 34. . . *Father . . . I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.* John, xvii. 4.

10°. *By removing obstacles*, whatever they may be, such as: dislike of one's state or condition; inordinate and restless

longing of what appears to be better from the worldly point of view. . . . Likewise ignorance of one's duties. . . .

11°. *By using the means*, which are prayer and meditation. . . . By prayer God's assistance must be sought, and His blessing invoked. By meditation or reflection, each one should know and understand his duties, and their priceless value when duly performed.

12°. In particular the motives should be considered. From the exact performance of duty according to one's state in life, there spring for each one peace of soul and hope of future reward—we might call it health of soul, like unto health of body, which arises from the harmony with which the different members perform their functions.

13°. Let not the reward be lost sight of ; if labour deters, the reward invites : *Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven.* Matth. v. 12.

Peroration. Wherefore, beloved brethren, let us, each and all, strive to know and do that work for which God has placed us here. Thus we shall have peace in this life, and eternal happiness in the next.

VIRTUES AND GOOD WORKS.

*As the vine I have brought forth a pleasant odour ;
and my flowers are the fruit of honour and riches.—*
Eccli. xxiv. 23.

IT is not enough for a Christian to avoid sin ; it is necessary for him in addition to bend his will towards virtue and good works : *Decline from evil and do good.* Ps. xxxvi. 27. Indeed exercise in virtue should be the one and only great concern of a Christian.

But if we consider the ways of men, it becomes quite evident that this pursuit is by no means the concern of all, nay not even the primary one in their life ; but rather it is for many the least—that is if they give it a thought at all. . . . Some go in pursuit of riches only, because they do not appreciate the excellence, or recognise the necessity, of virtue. . . . There are others who, in theory, desire virtue, but fail to acquire it, because they do not know how to do so.

That we may belong to neither class, that we may appreciate virtue, and know how to acquire it, we should reflect on the following considerations :

I. What is the true notion of virtue and good works ?

II. Why should they be performed ?

III. How can we do so ?

I. What is the true notion of virtue and good works ?

In other words what is virtue ? What are good works ? And how are they divided ?

1°. What is virtue ? (1) Virtue is the habit of performing salutary acts (*habitus bene agendi*).

(2) It is as it were a holy root from which good acts spring, just as, by contrast, vice is an evil root.

(3) Although *virtue*, properly speaking, is distinguished from an *act* of virtue, as the root is distinguished from the branch that springs from it, still, in ordinary speech, the two are referred to under the same name.

(4) Virtue is an ornament of the soul ; it is to it what clothes are to the body, what flowers are to the field, what the stars are to the firmament. . . .

(5) It is nobility of soul ; St. Ambrose (On Noah and the Ark, ch. 4) puts it well when he says : *Virtue is the offspring of an upright man ; because as men are the offspring of men, so virtue is the offspring of the soul. As families are ennobled by splendour of race, so the beauty of the soul is ennobled by the splendour of virtue.*

(6) It is the treasure of the soul, which neither rust nor moth can consume. . . . It is the only precious thing in this transitory world. . . . *If therefore, Christian brethren, you wish to be wealthy, have a love for true riches.* S. Greg. Hom. 15 on Gospel.

(7) It is the produce of the soul, as a harvest is the produce of a field. . . .

(8) It is the proper perfection of a rational soul, by reason of which man is called good ; just as a tree is said to be good according to the fruit it bears. . . .

(9) It is a likeness of Christ, and the counterpart of His image : in other words, to practise virtue is to pencil His image on the soul. . . .

2°. How are the virtues divided ?

(1) Into infused and acquired virtues, according as they are supernaturally implanted in the soul by God, or are

attained by our own effort. . . They can be infused whole and entire and fully developed, as happened in the case of the Apostles on Pentecost ; or, as is the usual way, they come to us in the manner of a fire that grows from the spark beneath the coals. . .

(2) They are divided into theological and moral virtues. The theological virtues are : Faith, Hope, and Charity ; the moral virtues : prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance, and all that relates to them. . .

(3) Into fundamental and accessory virtues—(by accessory are here meant those that spring from the fundamental virtues). . . The fundamental include, first, the theological virtues and in addition humility, fear of God, that is, hatred of sin, mortification and patience, prayer and piety, conformity with the divine will. . . The accessory virtues are all others besides those enumerated, for instance, temperance, chastity, meekness, generosity, joy, etc.

(4) Considering them as constituent parts of the spiritual temple, we can divide them further into three classes. Some have to do with the foundation, such as, faith, prayer, compunction, penance, obedience, and humility. Some with the columns that support the temple, such as hope, confidence, piety, self-denial, mortification, patience, temperance, chastity, modesty, recollection, fortitude, and purity of intention. Others with the roof of the temple, such as charity, generosity, zeal, mildness, joy, conformity with the divine will, remembrance of the divine presence, and union with God. . .

3°. What are good works ? . . Under this name are included (1) all acts of virtue ; (2) all upright and well ordered actions, such as those that are done in accordance with the obligation of one's state in life ; (3) especially those works that pertain to the good of our neighbour, such as almsgiving, and membership in a beneficent society, such as that known as the S. Vincent de Paul Society ; also the circulation of good books, helping to propagate the faith, and contributing towards religious education, etc.

4°. How are good works divided?

(1) Into prayer, fasting, alms-giving, and other works pertaining thereto.

(2) Some relate to God, such as prayer, the sacraments, meditation, pious reading, and hearing the word of God, etc. ; some relate to ourselves, such as all actions done according to the obligation of our state in life . . . all acts, even indifferent ones, that are elevated by a pure intention : *Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God.* 1 Cor. x. 31 ; some refer to our neighbour, such as (a) putting up with his defects and shortcomings, and forgiveness of injuries, every beneficent act that has to do with either corporal or spiritual mercy. . .

II. Why should we exercise ourselves in virtues and good works?

On account of the excellence of the object in itself, and because there is an obligation to do so.

1°. Because, as explained already, virtues and good works are the ornaments, and treasure, of the soul.

2°. Because they are the root of peace. . .

3°. Because of the sweet pleasure in doing good, especially in bringing solace to those in misery. . .

4°. Because the Apostle admonishes us to do so : *Follow after charity, be zealous for spiritual gifts.* 1 Cor. xiv. 1.

5°. Because I am a Christian, and therefore (1) a man called by God to virtue, and bound to the same by contract made in Baptism ; (2) because I am called to imitate Christ, the example of virtue ; (3) because I am intended for heaven, for which I should render myself worthy by practising virtue ; (4) because I am called to partake of the sacraments, particularly the sacrament of the Eucharist, for which the adornment of virtue is required ; (5) because I am bound to render good example : *We are the good odour of Christ . . . shining as lights in the world.* 2 Cor. ii. 15 ; Philipp. ii. 15.

6°. Because for that God's precious gifts are given to me—time, grace, and whatever talent I may possess.

7°. Because the example of the Saints calls out to me to do as they did. . . .

8°. Because when I come to die, I shall take hence nothing except the gold of virtue and merit : *Their works follow them.* Apoc. xiv. 13.

9°. Because I am placed here as if a trader to amass a fortune for eternity ; and in eternity the only riches that count are those of virtue. . . .

10°. Because I am that fig tree planted in the garden of the Church which, unless it bear fruit, shall be cut down. Luke, xiii. 6.

11°. Because I am a branch of the vine tree, which is Christ ; a branch which, unless it bear fruit, shall be cast into the fire. John, xv. 2, 6.

12°. Dilatoriness, pretexts, excuses are of no avail : *whilst we have time, let us work good.* Gal. vi. 10.

III. How can we do so ?

In other words, how must virtue be acquired, and preserved, and augmented ? How are good works to be performed ?

1°. How ? . . . Efficaciously, promptly, with method.

2°. How ? . . . They are partly infused by God, and in part acquired by our own efforts. . . . Our co-operation is always needed. . . .

3°. How ? . . . In this regard there are various classes of men. . . . Some have souls altogether barren of virtue, and full of vice ; some are weak in virtue ; other some are rich therein.

4°. Virtues are acquired just like other things, the arts for instance, as knowledge is acquired, as a picture is painted, as a fortune is amassed, by application of mind, that is, by study and labour. There is this difference, however, that, in gaining knowledge and amassing a fortune, success does not always correspond with the measure of our desire, study, and efforts, but it is always so in the pursuit of things spiritual.

5°. By praying and co-operating : virtue must be cultivated like the tender plant or seed, or must be fanned

into a flame like the spark that starts the fire. *I admonish thee, that thou stir up the grace of God which is in thee.* 2 Tim. i. 6.

6°. By doing, and by repeated acts. One can become an artisan only by working at a trade. . . Habit is overcome by habit. . . S. Francis of Sales, on being asked in what consisted the art of virtue and sanctity, replied: "Truly," he said, "I know no other secret than that we love God with our whole heart, and our neighbour as ourselves." . . But how is this love acquired? By loving: just as an infant learns to speak by speaking, and to walk by walking.

7°. It is helpful, however, to know the order of the virtues, by which I mean the order in which they should be acquired. According to this order, humility is first, the second is self-denial and mortification in its threefold form, and third, knowledge and love of God. . . But in practice it is not necessary to build the spiritual edifice piecemeal, as in the case of artificial work, but rather, after the manner of the acts we perform naturally, at the same time and all together.

8°. By frequentation of the sacraments. . .

9°. By pious reading, and hearing the word of God. . .

10°. By reflecting on the example of Christ, the Saints, and those known for their piety. . .

11°. By considering the ways of worldlings, who, with so much labour, go after money, honours and pleasures; yes even, by considering the ways of evil men, who put forth so many and so great efforts for the ruin of souls. . .

12°. By complete victory over oneself. *Watch over thyself. . . The greater violence thou offerest to thyself, the greater progress thou wilt make.* Imit. i. 25.

13°. By the twofold exercise of keen vigilance and particular examination. Or reflection and self victory. S. Ignat.

14°. We must be careful to so guard the treasure of virtue that has been acquired, that it may not be lost or snatched from us. . .

15³. It is an excellent thing to join some society or sodality. We can in this regard adapt the words of Genesis : *It is not good for man to be alone.* ii. 18. . . . *Woe to him that is alone, for when he falleth, he hath none to lift him up.* Eccle. iv. 10.

16³. We should not be deterred by difficulties ; nor should we give way to despair. Our motto should be : *I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me.* Phil. iv. 13. . . . *Have confidence, I have overcome the world.* John, xvi. 33.

Peroration. Let us enter, therefore, on the glorious way for Christ and His saints, and those who were the flower of the human race, have gone before us. . . . The way of righteousness is likewise the way of peace. . . . Treading it, our footsteps are directed where shines eternal light : *The path of the just, as a shining light, goeth forwards and increaseth even to perfect day.* Prov. iv. 18.

THE VIRTUE OF FAITH.

Thy faith hath made thee whole.—Mark, x. 52.

WE shall not be saved except through faith: this is the way of salvation laid down by God; besides it, there is no other. . . .

But perhaps you will ask, shall everyone who has faith be saved? By no means: if that were so all Christians would be saved. . . . But does not Scripture say: *He who believes shall be saved*? Yes indeed, *He who believes* as he ought, that is, he who has faith which finds expression in charity, and *has been baptized*, that is, he who on receiving Baptism not only promises, but in reality observes the law of Christ—yes he shall be saved. . . .

What is the meaning of the words *to believe as we ought*? We shall understand them when we reflect on the two following questions:

I. What is Faith?

II. What should be the Faith of a true Christian?

I. What is Faith?

It is a divine light given to man that he may know his state and condition in this world.

1°. Man in this world is a wayfarer, needing light that he may direct his footsteps. What the light of the sun is to our daily footsteps, that the light of faith is to the man who wants to gain heaven. Without it we do but grope. With it we can walk confidently onward. . . . What then is this light of faith? To put it briefly, it is the word of God. . . .

2°. And has God spoken to us? Yes, *in sundry ways and in divers manners*. Heb. i. i. . . He has spoken to us through His Son, whose Apostles came to our fathers the gentiles . . . Our fathers believed the word of the Apostles, as the temples they erected testify. . .

3°. What has God said to us? . . . What do you recite in the Creed? What do you read in sacred Scripture? What do you hear in sermons? . . . That God has spoken to you. . .

4°. But how do I know with infallible certainty that this is the word of God? Because His infallible Church, Scripture and Tradition have said so. *Blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it*. Luke, xi. 28.

II. What should our Faith be?

It should be *firm, vivid, and efficacious*.

1°. *Firm*, that is, not hesitating, but founded on infallible truth: *Heaven and earth shall pass, but my words shall not pass*. Matth. xxiv. 35. . . Worldly kingdoms pass, but the Church lasts for ever, because it is founded on the word of God. . . Why therefore not believe the word of God? . . . If a human being upright and worthy of confidence told you what he himself had seen, would you not believe? . . . But does not God see and know the things of which He speaks? . . . Woe to those who do not believe! Later on, they will not only know, but experience: but then—time shall be no more! . . .

2°. *Vivid*, just as if we saw with our eyes, and touched with our hands. . . The difference between vivid and weak faith is—to use a familiar comparison—the difference between seeing a thing near, and at a distance. . . How can we know whether we have this vivid faith? For instance, do you realise the presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist with as much vividness as if you saw Him with your eyes? If so, you have vivid faith. . .

3°. *Efficacious*. Without works faith is dead. It should bring forth fruit. . . And what kind? The

fruit of good works and of charity, and should bring happiness. . . . Would that our faith were vivid ! Blessed are the parents, the children, the rich, the poor, as the case may be, who possess the priceless gift of a vivid faith. . . .

4°. Do you wish to preserve this precious gift ? Then flee the causes of unbelief, which are : ignorance of one's religion, indifference, pride, human respect, and corruption of heart. . . .

5°. Do you wish to have vivid faith ? . . . Then frequent the sacraments, especially the Blessed Eucharist, which is called the *mystery of faith*. . . . Then you shall have faith, such faith as you should possess, such faith as will save you : *He who believes shall be saved*.

THE VIRTUE OF HOPE.

That you may abound in hope, and in the power of the Holy Ghost.—Rom. xv. 13.

CHRISTIAN hope is another theological virtue, which, on the foundations of faith, raises its pillars that sustain the roof and charity.

I. What is Christian Hope.

II. Why should we have Hope?

III. What should our Hope be?

I. What is Christian Hope?

1°. It is a virtue divinely infused into the soul, by which we firmly expect, on the strength of God's promise, eternal life and happiness, as also the means of attaining the same.¹ In this definition two things are to be considered (1) the object of hope, and (2) the foundation of hope.

2°. *The object of hope* is eternal life in the next world, and the means of salvation in this. . . . These means of salvation consist in a good and Christian life, by which we merit future happiness, and to which we refer all things in this life, both spiritual and temporal.

3°. *The object of hope in particular* is what we ask for in the Lord's prayer, our daily bread, the remission of our sins,

¹ Thus is Christian hope strictly defined. As such it is distinguished from *Christian confidence* (commonly called hope), which consists in a trust in God amidst all the vicissitudes of life.

triumph over our passions, mercy at the hour of death and judgment, and a glorious resurrection. . . . Hope essentially refers to the future : accordingly, with the possession of its object, it shall cease—namely, in heaven.

4°. *The foundation of our hope* is God Himself : that is, the promise founded on the solemn declaration of God : *As I live, saith the Lord God, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live.* Ezech. xxxiii. 11. . . . *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.* Mark, xvi. 16. . . . *Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you.* Matth. vi. 33.

5°. The foundation of our hope is threefold : The goodness of God towards us ; His omnipotence to aid us ; His fidelity to his promise to do so. . . .

6°. The symbol of hope is the anchor. As an anchor steadies a ship, so does hope make steady our heart amidst the storms of life. . . . Other symbols are : a husbandman sowing seed . . . a ship bearing precious merchandise . . . Peter walking on the sea. . . .

7°. How does hope differ from charity ? . . .

II. Why should we have Hope ?

1°. Because there is a precept of God to that effect ; and hope is much commended in Sacred Scripture : *Continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and immovable from the hope of the Gospel.* Col. i, 23.

2°. Because it is a most sweet solace in this land of exile, as also our strength in troubles and dangers, and the fruitful seed of great and heroic actions. . . .

3°. Because, on our part, we are most weak : *Without me you can do nothing.* John, xv. 5.

4°. Because, on God's part, all things urge and move us to confidence : God is our father . . . the good shepherd . . . the doctor of our souls, whose aim is to heal, and not to slay. . . . And if it be objected that God is an avenger, a judge to be feared, it should be remembered that

He is such only to those who do not place their trust in Him : *No one hath hoped in the Lord, and hath been confounded.* Eccli. ii. 11. *Cursed be the man that trusteth in man.* . . . *Blessed be the man that trusteth in the Lord.* Jeremias, xvii. 5 and following.

5°. Because God is (1) omniscient, seeing our every danger and infirmity, (2) omnipotent, holding in His hand every help, and every remedy, (3) most loving, full of benevolence towards us, more willing to assist and save us, than we are to seek His aid. . . . Which three characteristics of God are expressed by the symbol of the *eye*, the *hand* and the *heart*—the all seeing eye ever open and watching, the hand of power balancing the world, and the heart of love all on fire. . . .

6°. Because Christ again and again tried to foster confidence in the hearts of His disciples. *Thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?* . . . *Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?* . . . *I am he, fear not.* . . . *Have confidence, I have overcome the world.*

7°. Because the words, the Passion, and the promises of Christ, as well as the intercession of Mary and the Saints inspire confidence.

8°. Because despair, weak-mindedness, and dejection of spirit, are the beginning of all evil, precluding all remedy. . . .

9°. Because there is no reason for despair, nor even for diffidence. Has not God most truly promised, and entered into the most solemn compact, which is written in seventy-two books of Scripture, and is stamped with the seal of His blood? . . . Is He not faithful? . . . Can He deceive as men do? . . . Has He not the power to keep His promise? . . . Or do you think that His promises are slow of fulfilment? Then listen to His words : *Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me.* Apoc. xxii. 12. . . . Finally, do you fancy that the conditions imposed are hard? What are they to the much harder conditions that the world imposes on its dupes? . . .

10°. Why is hope in God often so weak, seeing that hope in men is so ready and firm? . . . Because the soul

while confined in the body is slow to see and appreciate the light and truth—it is like to a captive in a dark cell. . . . It can soar to be sure beyond the sphere of things visible ; but it will not do so, until forced hence on the wings of death. . . .

III. What should our Hope be ?

1°. It should observe the golden mean, should hold an even balance, between despair and presumption. . . .

2°. We should hope *firmly*, relying on God ; *perseveringly*, in prosperity and adversity ; *efficaciously*, by co-operating so far as is in our power—we should imitate the husbandman who, when he has done his work, expects rain and sunshine and a harvest. . . .

3°. We should hope always ; *we should hope against hope*, our confidence deepening with danger. . . . As a rainbow over the agitated waters of the cataract, so should our hope rise above and span the most desperate straits in life. . . .

4°. Our hope should make to itself two wings wherewith to fly—diffidence in ourselves, and confidence in God. . . . *I despair, I am plunged in desperation, I despair of myself, but I most fully hope in God ; I expect nothing of myself, but all things from God.* S. Philip Neri.

5°. Nevertheless hope should be active. S. Ignatius puts it forcibly when he says : *We ought to confide so in God as if we expected nothing of ourselves ; but at the same time we should so work, as if we expected nothing from God.*

6°. We should fulfil the conditions of hope. . . . The promises of God are conditional : we should pray, do what is in our power, avoid danger, and dispose our heart. . . . If you wish to obtain temporal favours, and your daily bread, then keep the commandments : *Seek first the Kingdom of God, and his justice, and—then only, but infallibly—all these things will be added unto you.*

7°. Two most frequent defects must be avoided : (1) too great confidence regarding salvation, as if it completely

depended on God; (2) too little confidence regarding temporal matters, as if they solely depended on our own efforts. . . .

8°. In this matter of hope, there are various classes of people: some put their trust in men; some in themselves; some, like Eve, believe the devil; and some hope in God.

Conclusion. Ps. xc.: *He that dwelleth in the aid of the most High, shall abide under the protection of the God of heaven.*
 . . . *Because he hoped in me I will deliver him. . . . I will fill him with length of days, and I will show him my salvation.*

THE VIRTUE OF CHARITY.

GENERAL VIEW.

I. What is Charity ?

II. Why should the Virtue of Charity be cultivated ?

III. What should our Charity be ?

IV. How is it acquired ?

I. What is Charity ?

1°. It can be defined : Of all virtues the greatest, a virtue infused by God, by which we love God above all things, for His own sake, and our neighbour as ourself for the love of God.¹ . . . In this definition, three things are to be noted : the object of charity, both primary and secondary ; the motive of both ; and the measure of both.

2°. Charity is a habit, or inclination of will, consisting not so much in affect (inward disposition) as in effect, or observance of the divine law : *He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.* John, xiv. 21.

3°. It is a virtue which so belongs to God, to Christ, and to Christians, that it is said, in each case, to be characteristic.

4°. It is of all virtues the highest, the sweetest, and the easiest.

¹ If charity be taken to mean sanctifying grace, with which it is always connected, then all that applies to grace can be said of charity also.

5°. It is a virtue one in principle, although twofold in its object—extending, as it does, both to God, and one's neighbour. For instance, friendship is one; but if you love your friend, you likewise love your friend's son. . . . For the same reason, love of God and love of one's neighbour are inseparable, growth in one implying growth in the other—root and branch of the same tree.

6°. Charity joins us to God in true friendship; and as such it is characterized by the three conditions of friendship, namely, that it be (1) benevolent (or well wishing), (2) mutual, and (3) that it imply likeness.

7°. It is the first and greatest commandment; the compendium and perfection of the entire law.

8°. Charity can be variously distinguished: (1) charity in exile and charity at home (charity on earth and in heaven); (2) perfect and imperfect charity; (3) incipient, progressing, and perfect charity—in other words, charity of the first grade, which avoids mortal sin, charity of the second grade, which strives to avoid venial sins, and charity of the third grade, which seeks to please God in all things. . . .

9°. Charity towards one's neighbour: one form is passive, which abstains from injuries, the other is active, which does good.

10°. It is the noblest of the virtues: (1) it is the queen of other virtues; (2) it is the mother and guardian of them; (3) it gives them life, value and splendour; (4) it gives to God the heart, which is the compendium of man, and as such the man himself, while the other virtues give only a part; (5) charity gives the whole tree, whereas the other virtues present only a branch or fruit; (6) charity shall never pass away, but shall be perfected in eternity. . . .

11°. Viewed symbolically, charity is the sun that vivifies the spiritual world, and gives fertility to the garden of the Church. . . . It is the white light of the sun, containing within itself all colours. . . . It is the fire which Christ cast into the world, intending it to burn brightly, purifying, illuminating, spreading and never satisfied. . . . It is the fire of the Holy Spirit, extinguishing—as fire puts out

fire—the flame of the flesh, the flame of hell, and the flame of purgatory. . . . It is burnished gold ; it is the precious pearl of the Gospel ; it is the flower on the rose-bush ; it is the watered, well kept garden and paradise of the Lord. . . .

12°. The symbol and, at the same time, the example of charity is Christ as the good shepherd, seeking the sheep that has gone astray, and laying down His life for His sheep. . . . Likewise Christ in His Eucharistic life, made captive by love, and feeding us with His own flesh. . . .

13°. The attributes of charity are two : union and beneficence. . . . *Union*, that is, a certain bond between the lover and the loved : which consists in (1) union of mind, of heart and will ; (2) union of intercourse and fellowship ; (3) and union in the way of living. . . . *Beneficence*, that is, well doing—the lover gives to the beloved (1) External goods, or part of them ; (2) his work and kind offices ; (3) and is prepared to endure sorrows in his behalf, and, if necessary, to give life itself. . . .

14°. Viewed in particular in regard to our neighbour, the beneficence of charity embraces the following acts : (1) forgiveness of injuries ; (2) bearing his defects ; (3) compassion ; (4) alms-giving ; (5) fraternal correction ; (6) and in general all the works of mercy.

15°. The signs of charity in the soul are : frequent and spontaneous thought of God ; . . . careful and constant hearing of His word ; . . . kindness to the poor ; . . . love of Holy Mother the Church, as also respect for her ministers, and love of her worship. . . .

II. Why should Charity be cultivated ?

1°. On account of its excellence, its merit, and its fruit. . . . Charity renders all works highly meritorious, and in a manner changes them into gold. . . . Its fruits are light, joy, and peace . . . yes indeed all virtues, for of them it is in a manner the root.

2°. On account of its necessity : (1) it is of precept ; (2) it is a condition of salvation ; (3) it is a sign of the elect, which can be supplied by no other virtue : *If I have not charity, I am nothing.* 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

3°. Because charity is a sign of predestination. It makes man beloved of God ; nay even of men, for the memory of a man noted for charity is held in benediction. . . .

4°. It is the beginning of heaven in this life ; for it renders the soul a region of light, peace, and sanctity, where God wishes to dwell. . . . Later, in our heavenly kingdom, charity will be perfected. . . . Meantime, while we dwell here, it renders the yoke of Christ light and sweet. . . .

5°. All things urge us to the love of God : in heaven, where an inheritance awaits us ; on earth, where natural goods are given us by God, and where the blood of Christ and graces flow ; in hell, where there is awful demonstration what it is *not* to love God. . . . O how worthy of love is God, and what heart so cold as to be indifferent ! . . .

6°. To the love of our neighbour, many things urge us : the precept of Christ,—the person of Christ, who mystically manifests Himself to us in the least of our brethren : *As long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me.* Matth. xxv. 40. . . . In brotherhood, we all meet in Christ. . . .

7°. God the Creator, Christ the Redeemer, asks for, and demands, my heart—my love. How does He speak to me ? . . . In other words, how do my neighbours, my brethren, especially those who are needy, speak to me ? . . .

8°. How do the good reply to their invitations ? . . . How do the wicked reply ? . . .

III. What should our Charity be ?

1°. Sacred Scripture answers : *Let us not love in word, nor in tongue, but in deed, and in truth.* 1 John, iii. 18. . . . *The proof of love is the exhibition of work.* S. Greg. . . . Let not our love be a mere natural affection, by which we

love only those who love us, as the pagans, and even the animals do. . .

2°. It should be such as the Apostle describes, 1 Cor. xiii. 4: *Charity is patient, is kind; charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely; is not puffed up: is not ambitious . . . is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil . . . beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*

3°. It should be regulated according to the example of the heavenly Father, *who maketh his sun to rise upon the good, and bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust.* Matth. v. 45.

4°. According to the example of Christ, who laboured, and did good, and bore patiently, and forgave, and died for us. . . In particular according to His example as a prisoner of love in the Blessed Eucharist. . .

5°. According to the example shown us by the Sacred Heart of Jesus, burning with love, pierced with a lance, crowned with thorns, and bearing His cross.

6°. According to the example of the B. Virgin Mary, and the Saints. . .

7°. Our charity should, by one and the same act, embrace both God, and our neighbour: like to a boat that is propelled by two oars, like to a man as he walks with two feet, like to a bird as it flies with a pair of wings. . .

8°. Our charity ought to love, and guard, and foster whatever promotes the worship of God, and makes for the salvation of souls. . .

9°. Our charity ought to love God in the person of His beloved children, our neighbours, for, in the matter of charity, He has given them His own place: *Lovest thou me?* . . . *Feed My Lambs.* John, xxi. 16.

10°. In detail, what should the love of our neighbour be? . . . R. It should be (1) supernatural, (2) universal, and (3) effective. . . It should be supernatural by reason of principle and motive, penetrating with the eye of faith to what lies hidden in man—the divine image on his soul. . . It should be universal in regard to persons, making no distinction between friends and enemies. . .

It should be effective, finding expression in temporal and spiritual well-doing. . . .

11°. What should be the amount or measure of charity ? . . . Of love towards God there is no measure, since God can never be sufficiently loved and praised, being greater than all love. . . . Hence it is laid down that *God must be loved above all things, with our whole heart.* . . . The measure of love for our neighbour should be (1) that we love him as ourselves: *What you would not wish another to do to you, do you not to another ; what you would wish another to do to you, do you to another ;* and do it in judgment and affection, in word and in work ; (2) that we love him as Christ has loved us: *That you love one another, as I have loved you.* John, xiii. 34.

12°. In the matter of charity, there are various classes of Christians. . . .

13°. How is charity violated ? . . . What are the defects in charity ? . . . What vices are opposed to charity ?—Depraved love of ourselves, detraction, and scandal. . . .

IV. How is Charity acquired ?

In this connection we shall also ask the kindred questions : how is charity augmented ? how perfected ? how impeded ? how lost ?

1°. It is infused by God, provided we properly dispose our heart . . . it is infused, not fully developed, but as seed that must be cultivated, or as a spark that must be nourished and fanned into a flame. . . .

2°. It must be drawn from the burning Heart of Christ. . . .

3°. By being exercised—in the fulfilment of the obligations it demands—it becomes rooted and strengthened. *By loving we learn love*, says S. Francis of Sales.—Put an alms in the hand of the poor or of the Church, and you put it in the hand

of God ; bear with injuries ; let your goodwill towards all men be mirrored in a kindly and benign countenance. . . .

4°. By humbling ourselves. . . . A great obstacle to divine love is self-love and pride. *The Lord came to cast fire on the earth*—the humble low-lying earth, not into the clouds and high places. . . .

5°. By frequently approaching the Blessed Eucharist, which is the Sacrament of charity, the cup of love, the chalice that causes the heart to overflow. . . .

SPECIAL HEADINGS.

Charity or love of God.—God must be loved by us :—
I. In return for the love which he has for us : *I have loved thee with an everlasting love.* Jerem. xxxi. 3.—II. On account of the measure of His great love : *God so loved the world, as to give his only-begotten Son.* John, iii. 16.—III. For the sake of His own infinite perfections. . . .

Our love for God should be :—I. *Affective*, that is, the heart should desire to love God above all things, and should frequently—at least sufficiently—give heart-felt expression to that desire.—For instance, to give a human example, he who loves thinks frequently during the day of the object of his love. How then can one with truth say to God, *I love thee above all things*, if one scarcely ever, not even by a heart sigh, thinks of Him, or turns towards Him? . . . II. *Effectively*, that is, in such a way that the love will find outward expression in works : *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.* John, xiv. 21.—If a servant

says to his master, *I love thee*, but does not do the work imposed on him, his love is not true. If a rich man says to one who is poor, *I love thee*, and does not help him when he can do so, his love is not genuine. . . . Similarly with us in regard to God. . . .

Love for Christ our Lord. *Motives:* I. The kindness and sweetness of His humanity—the human-hearted man, so good to us, and like to us in all things, except sin. . . . II. The ineffable excellence of His divinity. . . . III. His goodness to us.

Fraternal Charity, or love of our neighbour. How necessary it is, is quite clear from—I. Sacred Scripture: *Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.* 1 John, iii. 15.—*If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar.* Ibid. iv. 20. . . . II. From the teaching of the Fathers: *Love is the sole test which distinguishes children of God from the children of the devil.* August. . . . III. From reason, founded on faith. We are all created by the same God, to the same image of God, and for the same end; we are redeemed by the same precious blood, and are members of the same Church; we are participators of the same sacraments: *For we, being many, are one bread, one body, all that partake of one bread.* 1 Cor. x. 17.

The obstacles to fraternal charity. . . . Those which chiefly impede charity are the following:—I. Evil suspicions, and rash judgments. No one can usurp a right that essentially belongs to God, and which God has reserved for Himself: *The Father . . . hath given all judgment to the Son.* John, v. 22. . . . *He who is bad himself, easily suspects others.* S. Ignat. . . . II. Detraction. . . . III. Lack of mutual forbearance. Why can you not bear with your brother? On account of his vices, and defects.

. . . But very often we count as vices what are merely natural defects . . . or what comes from the constitution or infirmities of the body . . . or what are purely fictitious, arising from difference in age, education, or disposition. . . . Everyone has his defects and shortcomings—such is a characteristic of life in this world. Hence the Apostle did not say, let each one shake off his defects, so as not to be a burden to his neighbour, but : *Bear ye one another's burdens, and so you shall fulfil the law of Christ.* Gal. vi. 2.

THE LOVE OF GOD.

Let us therefore love God, because God first hath loved us.—1 John, iv. 19.

WHAT should be the end of every prayer, of every work, of every effort of a Christian? Or what should be the aim of every desire of our soul in this life? . . . Is it not that the love of God may be diffused abundantly in our hearts; that we might be rooted and established in charity, which is the fulness of law, and the bond of perfection?

Charity or love of God—if we have it, we have in truth the spirit of Christ, and we possess the root of all virtues and of all sanctity.

The love of God—if we have it, we shall find the way of virtue not only easy but most sweet.

The love of God—if we possess it, we possess the beginning of beatitude even in this life, and earth for us is changed to a paradise. . . .

What then is this love of God, or this charity of which we speak?—It is a disposition of soul, by which we consider God the supreme good, and the highest object of affection, and with our heart embrace Him.—Or again, it is benevolence for God, whom we love, as children love their father, and render Him the obedience and respect that children pay to their father. . . . Love differs from fear: love is for children, fear for slaves. . . .

A gift indeed of God, and that the most perfect, charity truly is; a gift which the Holy Spirit infuses into our hearts; and which we can, and ought, foster and excite and inflame more and more. And this is easy to do, if only we contemplate the loveliness of God, at once our Creator and our Father. Such indeed is this loveliness, that if we know Him only in the slightest degree, and ever so little, we must

necessarily love Him.—Our heart is naturally and spontaneously inclined to love, and tends to go out to the good and beautiful. How then can we look upon God without loving Him with our whole heart? Wherefore let us contemplate His lovableness:

I. In His gifts.

II. In His presence.

III. In His works.

IV. In the perfections of His essence.

I. In His gifts.

The amiability of a friend chiefly shines forth in his gifts and his beneficence—from the giving of a cup of cold water, to his bestowing a fortune on you when in need. . . .

But who has been such a benefactor to you as the Lord your God? *What have you that you have not received?* 1 Cor. iv. 7.—Whatever you possess in the order of nature or of grace—has it not been prompted by his heart, and given from His hand? *Every best gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights.* James, i. 17.

1°. *In the order of nature.*—The heavens and earth, together with all things, like a well furnished house for you to dwell in;—your very life and existence;—your body with its senses;—your soul with its faculties;—your external goods;—the house in which you live, your daily bread, the clothes you wear, your fortune, your honours, your every power—are they not all so many gifts of God?

2°. *In the order of grace.*

The Creator has destined you for eternal happiness; He has redeemed you by the blood of His Son; He has enriched you by a series of graces, both internal and external:

which graces are strikingly apparent in your birth in the bosom of the Catholic Church, in your baptism, in your education, in the sacraments conferred on you, as well as in the good example with which you have been surrounded. . . . These are all so many favours received from your heavenly Father. . . . If any human being had bestowed on you the one ten-thousandth part of these gifts, how ardently you would love him in return! . . . Now recognise your true friend, and see how you have loved Him in return. *What shall I render to the Lord, for all the things that he hath rendered to me?* Ps. cxv. 3. . . . Let us say with S. Paul: *Lord, what wilt thou have me do?* Acts, ix. 6. . . . To which Christ replies: *If any one love me, he will keep my word.* John, xiv. 23. . . . Or let us reply in the words of Christ to His Eternal Father: *O my God, I have desired it (thy will), and thy law in the midst of my heart.* Ps. xxxix. 9. . . . *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem let my right hand be forgotten. Let my tongue cleave to my jaws, if I do not remember thee: if I make not Jerusalem the beginning of my joy.* Ps. cxxxvi.

II. The loveliness of God in His presence.

A friend wishes to be with a friend, and takes delight in his presence; after a time, and in turn, by constancy (the outcome of love) he grows into the affection of him whom he loves, and inflames his heart with his own warmth of feeling.

Now our Lord is beyond all comparison a lover of this kind, being ever present to us, with strong, appealing love. Hence the Psalmist, on realising this, cried out: *Whither shall I go from thy spirit.* Ps. cxxxviii. 7. . . . *Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord.* Jeremias, xxiii. 24.

He is present to us, 1° at all time, in light, and in darkness.
 . . . 2°. In every place, whether at home or abroad, in the market place, in the fields, and in our temples. . . .
 3°. But He is present for us in a special way in our temples—

whether it be the living temple of the heart, or the temple of stone which we name our church. . . . In this latter the Son of God incarnate, in all humility, loves to dwell with us. *My delights were to be with the children of men.* Prov. viii. 31. . . . *If any one love me . . . we will come to him, and will make our abode with him.* John, xiv. 23. . . . *Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.* Matth. xxviii. 20. . . . Who would not return the love of such a lover? . . .

III. The loveliness of God in His works.

A friend willingly works for a friend, and by so doing strengthens the bond of friendship between them.

And applying this test to divine friendship, let us ask, who has done as much for us as God? To Him pertains everything in the order of nature, whether physical or moral, as well as everything in the order of grace.

1°. *In the order of nature.*—He it is who moves and controls the entire course of nature. (1) Not a plant can grow, not a cloud can skip across the heavens, without His controlling hand. (2) Men may act with all the fiery fury of unbroken horses, but for all that God holds the reins. They may unfurl or fold the sails before the winds of passion; but the hand of God is ever on the helm. *He reacheth from end to end mightily, and ordereth all things sweetly* in human society, whether civil or ecclesiastical. In a word, nothing can happen without the express will of God, though, in certain matters, He does but permit, and for a time tolerate. . . .

The supreme engineer of the universe, without His controlling touch not the smallest wheel can rotate. . . . He disposes and orders all things, for the sake of His elect, for the sake of His Church, with a view to His own glory. . . . In this behold the reason of His providence, and the key to the enigma of the world. . . .

The world indeed, like an agitated sea, casts up its waves, and lashes its shores. *Wonderful are the surges of the sea;*

but not less *wonderful is the Lord on high* (Ps. 92), who controls the waves of humanity, and brings all things into subjection to His will. . . .

(3) And not only human society in general, but likewise every family and every individual, His providence embraces. All things are disposed for us by God . . . and are disposed for our salvation, whether they appear good or evil. *To them that love God, all things work together unto good.* Rom. viii. 28. . . . *O Lord, our Lord, how admirable is thy name in the whole earth.* Ps. viii.

2°. In the order of grace.

What has God as author of grace done for the world? Has he not *showed might in his arm*, sending His only-begotten Son into the world, *that the world may be saved by him.* John, iii. 17. . . . And this His beloved Son—what has He done, what has He endured for us?

(1) *As to His real body*—we know how He was born, and lived, and laboured, and preached, and suffered, and died as a victim of love for us: *Who loved me, and delivered himself for me.* Gal. ii. 20.

(2) And in *His mystic body*, which is the Church, what does He do and suffer? . . . What does He do? He causes to flourish all the virtues that adorn it; which are the fruit and good odour of Christ. . . . What does He suffer or endure? He endures persecutions, heresies, and schisms. . . . Also He enters deeply into her joys; for, being intimately united with the Church, and, identified with her by spiritual and mystic unity, He is both Her Spouse and Head; and as such He loves her with ineffable love, and in loving her He loves us who constitute the body of the Church: in the words of S. Paul, *we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.* Ephes. v. 30.

Who so cold as not to return love for such love? Who would not love a Lord so loving and lovable, as He desires to be loved, in His Church, and His members? weeping with those who weep, rejoicing with those who feel joy, labouring and giving oneself wholly for that dearest Spouse *whom He hath purchased with his own blood.* Acts, xx. 28.

IV. The loveliness of God in the perfections of His essence.

As God is so lovable in His works, what must He be in Himself, and in the beauty of His nature? That we shall fully know only on the day of His coming; meantime we must be content with contemplating Him through a *mirror and in a dark manner*.

But though we see Him only thus, how beautiful for all that is the image!

Whatsoever is beautiful, whatsoever is good, in created things, is from God, coming as the river from its source, as the rays of light from the sun. . . The heavens with all their splendour, the earth with all that is in it, proclaim the glory of God: they are a mirror in which the Almighty is seen; a book in which we read His name; a hymn that ever commemorates His power, His glory and His loveliness.

To this the Saints were fully alive, and, in all things, they saw, contemplated and loved God. . . And what they did, we too can do.

Thus our lives will breathe of the sweet odour of heaven; and, walking before Him in sanctity and justice during this our mortal career, we shall one day, face to face, see Him as He is.

Conclusion. Do we wish to receive this most precious gift of God, this sacred and living fire, this more abundant life of soul? Then let us draw near to the source—the Sacred Heart of Jesus. . . *In that day there shall be a fountain open to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.* Zach. xiii. 1. That fountain is on our altars, in the adorable Sacrament of the Eucharist. Let us therefore approach and receive of its fulness (John, i. 16), and we *shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains.* Isaias, xii. 3.

CHARITY TO THE POOR.

Give, and it shall be given to you : good measure and pressed down and shaken together and running over shall they give into your bosom.—Luke, vi. 38.

Give to him that asketh of thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not away.—Matth. v. 42.

In behalf of the poor, for the consideration of the lot of the needy, we are assembled in this church to-day. I am the advocate ; you the judges. I shall plead their cause ; you shall determine what aid is to be given.

My task, however, is an easy one : for, on the one hand, you are generous ; and, on the other, the object is worthy of your generosity. . . . It would be quite sufficient for me to point out that the work is one of charity and mercy—what, if, in addition, I can prove to you that amongst the works of charity it is in a manner pre-eminent ? . . .

Charity ! Thou name of sweetness, thou name divine ! At the very mention of thee the heart of every Christian is moved. . . . And wherefore moved ?—Because God is charity ; Christ is charity ; the whole Christian law is charity : *Love is the fulfilling of the law.* Rom. xiii. 10.

Love of one's neighbour binds towards all men ; but especially towards the poor.

Charity to the poor is so precious, that, if Christian people fully realised it, they would give alms for the very happiness of giving. We have Scriptural warrant that it is a *more blessed thing to give than to receive.* Acts, xx. 35.

With a view to understanding this better, we shall consider :

The motives that should lead us to exercise Charity.

It is recommended by 1° the voice of nature, 2° the voice of God, 3° the voice of the Saints, 4° by its own excellence, 5° by its fruits, 6° and by its necessity.

1°. It is recommended by the voice of nature. When you see one who is poor and needy, do you not hear within your heart the whisperings of our common nature, saying to you? behold thy brother, and one of thy own flesh; do not despise thy own flesh; do to another as you would wish another to do unto you. . . . When you see a rich man who is generous, does he not appear worthy of praise in your estimation? On the other hand, when you see one who is rich but at the same time avaricious and wanting in pity, do you not think him deserving of contempt? Does not all nature around you, the heavens and the earth, by the profusion of their gifts, invite you in the inmost recesses of your heart to act generously?

2°. It is recommended by the voice of God, who speaks both by word and example.

Deuter. xv. 7 and following: *Thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor close thy hand, but shalt open ~~it~~ to the poor man. . . . Beware lest perhaps a wicked thought steal in upon thee . . . and thou turn away thy eyes from thy poor brother . . . lest he cry against thee to the Lord, and it become a sin unto thee. But thou shalt give to him . . . that the Lord thy God may bless thee at all times, and in all things to which thou shalt put thy hand. There will not be wanting poor in the land of thy habitation; therefore I command thee to open thy hand to thy needy and poor brother, that liveth in the land.*

Thus God speaks by word; with equal emphasis He does so by *example*. God calls Himself the father of the poor. Christ was poor, and the friend of the poor: *Being rich he became poor for your sakes: that through his poverty you might be rich.* 2 Cor. viii. 9. . . . *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* Matth. v. 3. He fed the poor who followed Him into the desert: *I have compassion on the multitude, for behold they have now been with me three*

days, and have nothing to eat. Mark, viii. 2. . . . And again He says of Himself : *The spirit of the Lord is upon me. Wherefore he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor.* Luke, iv. 18.

3°. It is recommended by the voice of His Saints. . . . All unanimously repeat the words of Christ : *Give alms. Make to yourselves bags which grow not old, a treasure in heaven which faileth not ; where no thief approacheth, nor moth corrupteth.* Luke, xii. 33.

S. Augustine, speaking of Tobias (serm. 226), says : *Behold, dearly beloved, the effect of alms-giving—it merited for Tobias to have an angel as assistant. . . . You see that alms-giving delivers from death, even purges from sin, opens the eyes, and disperses the darkness that enclouds sinners.*

Other examples—to mention but a few—are those of S. John the Alms-giver, S. Felix of Valois, and S. Vincent of Paul. . . .

In the time of the Apostles a collection for the poor was taken up on every Sunday : *Now concerning the collections that are made for the saints, as I have given to the churches of Galatia, so do ye also. On the first day of the week let everyone of you put apart with himself, laying up what it shall well please him.* 1 Cor. xvi. 1.

S. Justin (Apol. 2) bears testimony to this custom.

4°. Charity is commended by its own excellence.

(1) Other virtues, such as temperance, might be described as silver ; but charity as gold. . . . Almsgiving is commended by its very name : for “ alms ” signifies “ mercy.”

(2) He who is generous is rendered like, not only to the angels, but to God Himself. . . .

(3) He who gives food and clothing to the poor, gives to Christ Himself : *He that hath mercy on the poor lendeth to the Lord ; and he will repay him.* Prov. xix. 17.

5°. It is commended by its fruits.

(1) It brings down the blessing of God in this life, even on one's temporal affairs. . . .

(2) It cleanses from sin

(3) It is a fountain of joy and peace. . . .

(4) It is the seed of merit. . . .

(5) It is the pledge of a happy death, of a favourable judgment, and of eternal happiness : *Come, ye blessed of my Father.* Matth. xxv. 34.

(6) It is a lucrative business, whereby we buy cheap, and sell at a great price. . . . For the mere temporal we get the eternal in exchange. . . .

6°. Not only is it commended—as we have already seen—but it is enforced by all the urgency of obligation. (1) There is a precept dealing with alms-giving ; a precept which Dives failed to comply with, and Sacred Scripture tells us with what result. . . . Why will the reprobate be damned in judgment ? S. Matth. (xxv. 42) supplies the reason : *For I was hungry, and you gave me not to eat ; I was thirsty, and you gave me not to drink.*

(2) It is necessary on the score of gratitude ; from God we have received all things. . . .

(3) Likewise it is necessary that we may obtain mercy : *Blessed are the merciful ; for they shall obtain mercy.* Matth. v. 7. . . . *Judgment without mercy to him that hath not done mercy.* James, ii. 13.

(4) Salvation is necessary ; but the rich shall not be saved except by alms-giving : *Make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity ; that when you shall fail, they may receive you into everlasting dwellings.* Luke, xvi. 9.

Now as to the objections that are urged. They can be reduced to the following : the poor as you know them are unworthy ; they are too numerous ; their necessity is feigned, not real ; and they abuse the alms received. . . .

If the poor are many, then, in proportion, many are your occasions for doing good. . . . All that is required is that you give according to your means.¹ . . . Ask yourself if you find the means for indulging in the vanities and luxuries of life ; and if so, what excuse can there be for neglecting the poor ? . . .

Have no fear that generosity to the poor will impoverish you. Try it, and experience will teach you. One thing you

¹ See Tobias, iv. 7 and following ; also Luke, xxi. 1-4.

should fear, and that is avarice : *The desire of money is the root of all evils.* 1 Tim. vi. 10.

Conclusion. Almighty God, in speaking through the fire-seared lips of Isaias, says : *Deal thy bread to the hungry, and bring the needy and the harbourless into thy house ; when thou shalt see one naked, cover him, and despise not thy own flesh. Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy health shall speedily arise, and thy justice shall go before thy face, and the glory of the Lord shall gather thee up. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall hear ; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. . . . When thou shalt pour out thy soul to the hungry, and shalt satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall thy light rise up in darkness, and thy darkness shall be as the noonday. And the Lord will give thee rest continually, and will fill thy soul with brightness, and deliver thy bones, and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a fountain of water whose waters shall not fail.* Isaias, lviii. 7 and following.

BEARING THE CROSS.

FIRST DISCOURSE.

GENERAL VIEW.

But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.—Galat. vi. 14.

From the day, and from the fact, that the Son of God bore the cross to Calvary and there died upon it, a close relation and inseparable union have sprung up between the cross and Christ, and, as a consequence, between the cross and Christ's follower—the Christian.

The cross has become the sign of Christianity: where the cross is, there is Christianity; where it is absent, Christianity is absent too. And not only is it the sign of Christianity, but it is likewise its symbol and its compendium.

The cross speaks, and its voice is the expression of Christ's doctrine, and the summary of Evangelical perfection. The Apostles preached the word of the cross: *The word of the cross*, says S. Paul, *to them indeed that perish, is foolishness; but to them that are saved, that is, to us, it is the power of God.* 1 Cor. i. 18.

Would that we could understand its voice, so that it may become to us the power and influence of God, the earnest and pledge of our salvation!

With a view to understanding it, we shall consider:

I. What is the Cross of Christ and of the Christian?

II. Why should the Cross be borne?

III. How should it be borne?

I. What is the Cross ?

1°. Physically or materially considered, it is a frame of X-shaped wood, the wood of ignominy, from which of old condemned slaves were suspended until they died.

2°. Figuratively or metaphorically considered, it is the sign of Christianity, the standard of Christ, the symbol of His religion and of salvation. . . . We might further distinguish between the cross of Christ and the Christian cross.

3°. As cross of Christ, it is at once the instrument of His torture and death, and the symbol of all His sorrows.

4°. The Christian cross is threefold: (1) the sign of the cross which we make with our hand; (2) the image of the cross by which Christ's passion is brought before our eyes; (3) and participation in the cross, by which a Christian suffers with His Master. . . . Of the cross as taken in this last sense we shall principally speak, and shall call it simply *the cross*.

5°. The cross is any adversity that is borne by a Christian, in union with the sufferings of Christ. . . . It may be of various kinds:

(1) Corporal or spiritual; external or internal.

(2) It may be a cross of mortification, or of resignation in suffering. The former consists in abstaining from doing what is forbidden, and in denying the cravings of the flesh. The latter, as the name implies, consists in patiently and nobly bearing labours, and sickness, and all kinds of adversity. . . .

6°. The cross holds such an important place in the Christian life, that it has come to be known under many names and symbols: it is the ladder reaching up to heaven; the way to heaven; the key that opens heaven's gate. It is the column of rectitude and stability. . . . the pillar of cloud and fire that went before the camp of Israel. Exod. xiii. . . . It is the tree of life, planted in the centre of the garden of Paradise. Gen. ii. and Apoc. xxii. 2. . . . It is the couch whereon Christ sleeps, and the chair from which Christ

teaches. . . . It is the sign of war, and the standard of the faithful and the elect. . . . It is the staff on which David leaned when he brought Goliath down. . . . It is the staff of Israel sojourning in the desert. . . . It is the candlestick from which the light of him who would come after Christ must *shine for all who are in the house*—that is, in the Church. . . . It is the rod of Moses, which, thrown on the ground, became a serpent ; but taken in hand became a sceptre of power, and the instrument of victory. . . . It is the sign of victory : *In this you shall conquer*. . . . *In the cross is salvation*. . . . It is the entire life of a Christian, and the fulfilment of the duties of his state of life ; as the *Imitation* puts it : *Behold the cross is all*. ii. 12.

7°. We might ask, by whom are crosses imposed on us ? . . . Sometimes they are sent directly by God ; sometimes they may come from men ; but even in this latter case we are to accept them as if from the hand of God. When Christ took on His shoulders the cross prepared by His enemies, He, nevertheless, looked upon it as coming from His Father. Wherefore we are warranted in concluding that God is the principal cause, and men only the instruments. . .

But is not a man himself sometimes the cause of his cross and his tribulations ?—Yes indeed most frequently, whenever, for instance, the cross or suffering is the outcome of a life of sin and dissipation. But, even in this case, the cross should still be looked upon as coming from God, as a punishment and chastisement, and should accordingly be borne. . .

II. Why should the Cross be borne ?

1°. Because it comes from God, and is by Him placed on our shoulders. . .

2°. Because it is a gift of God, sent for a threefold end : to punish us,—to prove us,—to signify His love for us. *Such as I love, I rebuke and chastise*. Apoc. iii. 19.

3°. Because it is necessary to bear it. (1) Christ has expressly said so. (2) Otherwise we cannot be called Christians :

Whosoever doth not carry his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple. Luke, xiv. 27. (3) Because we cannot escape from it, but, willingly or unwillingly, must bear it. (4) If we try to escape, we only become more miserable. (5) Because with this sign our foreheads were sealed in Baptism. . . . (6) Look around and take notice of worldlings. Does wealth or luxury bring them happiness? Far from it—they are but Dead Sea apples. One thing then is certain: willingly or unwillingly the cross must be borne. . . .

4°. Because it is right that we bear it. Christ though innocent bore the cross; and shall I a sinner refuse it?

5°. It is profitable to our souls that we do so. The cross is the fountain of merit,—the school of virtue,—the way of heaven,—the sign and pledge of predestination,—*the sign of God on their foreheads.* Apoc. ix. 4.

6°. It is a glorious thing; for by the cross we shall be made like to Christ. . . .

7°. It is a sweet thing. Being the rod and staff of the Lord, it will bring comfort: *Thy rod and thy staff, they have comforted me.* Ps. xxii. 4. . . . It will act on the waters of life's sorrow, as did the wood which the Lord showed to Moses: *But he (Moses) cried to the Lord, and he (the Lord) showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, they were turned into sweetness.* Exod. xv. 25.

8°. In a word, the cross must be borne, because it is the way to heaven—the straightest, the shortest, the most certain, the most secure, the Saint-trodden, the way along which we have Jesus as our companion. . . .

III. How should the Cross be borne?

1°. In their attitude towards the cross, men act very differently. Some flee from it, and some embrace it; some repel it, and some receive it. . . . Who are they who flee from it? . . . Who are they who embrace it? . . . What are the effects in each case? . . . Who are the happy? and why are they happy? Because they are like Christ; are on the way to heaven; are ever increasing their

merit ; and can, in a manner, be regarded as marked with the sign of salvation and predestination. . . .

2°. Of those who bear the cross there are various classes.
 . . . Some carry it to hell. . . . Some to purgatory.
 . . . Some to paradise. . . . Some as the Gentiles not knowing the treasure that they bear. . . . Some unwillingly on account of their sins, like condemned criminals.
 . . . Some as good Christians should. . . . Some like the impenitent thief ; and some as the penitent thief.
 . . . Some like Simeon of Cyrene, who was forced to do so. . . . And some as Jesus, and His Apostles Peter and Andrew, and all His Saints. . . .

3°. It can be borne in many ways : (1) by estimating how precious it is, (2) by promptly taking it up, (3) by ardently desiring it, (4) by patiently submitting to it when laid on one's shoulders, (5) by rejoicing in tribulations, (6) and by glorying in it. *God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Gal. vi. 14.

4°. A certain anchorite, while rapt in spirit, saw three different classes of people carrying the cross. (1) Some bore it on their shoulder, laboriously dragging their steps along, and groaning the while ; (2) some took it in both hands, rejoicing in it as the standard of glory, and it seemed to them light of weight ; (3) the third class did not bear it themselves, but their guardian angel carried it by their side. . . . *It is good for a man, when he hath borne the yoke from his youth.* Lament, iii. 27.

5°. It is necessary to bear it in youth,—in manhood,—and in old age. . . .

6°. It is necessary to bear it with resignation, with perseverance, with confidence and fortitude, and with joy. . . .

7°. It is necessary to receive it from the hand of God,—to bear it with His aid, and for His sake. . . . It is the Lord : under shadow of the cross His will is hidden. *It is the Lord : let him do what is good in his sight.* 1 Kings, iii. 18.

8°. It is necessary to think, as S. Teresa always did, of three things : namely, one's sins and hell,—the passion of our Lord,—and heaven.

9°. It will be encouraging, if we look to the reward ; and helpful, if we contrast, in this respect, Saints with worldlings, —the martyrs of Christ with the martyrs of the devil.

Conclusion. Taking up our cross after the manner of Jesus and with the aid of Jesus, *let us go forth to him without the camp* (as He left Judaism, so should we leave carnal desires), *bearing his reproach . . . and having so great a cloud of witnesses . . . let us run by patience to the fight proposed to us, looking on Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, who having joy set before him, endured the cross . . . remembering that the sufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us.* Hebr. xii. xiii. ; Rom. viii. 18.

OTHER FORMS.

The crosses and afflictions of this life are a most efficacious means for our sanctification, since they draw away the soul from things worldly, and unite it to God.—I. They illuminate the mind, by showing the vanity and instability of earthly fortune, and by correcting the false idea which we are wont to entertain regarding them.—II. They free the heart from the bonds of affection and slavery, by which it is tied to temporal goods. And even though the cross be so severe as to deprive one of health, of wealth, or of fame, it may thereby remove the occasions of sin ; whilst in every case there will be a reward for bearing it patiently. How many a heart has soared to God only after the knife of adversity had cut the cords that bound it to earth and pleasure !—III. It binds the soul to God ; for a special grace lies hidden in

the cross of affliction. How often has an afflicted one found in God what one in vain sought in creatures—fidelity, true peace, and the only good! . . .

Whatsoever afflictions we have to endure in this life are small in comparison with: I. the number of our sins;—II. the bitterness of Christ's passion;—III. and the greatness of the glory which as a reward awaits us.

In afflictions there are three motives that should inspire confidence:—I. God is a witness of what we suffer;—II. God is either the author, or permits them for our good;—III. God will reward us.

There are three different effects of life's crosses according to the three different classes of persons, the wicked, the penitent, and the just. I. To the wicked crosses are hell anticipated: they suffer without patience and without consolation; just as the damned suffer with rage, with madness, with despair. . . . II. To the penitent, they are as purgatory; for by little suffering they satisfy much. . . . III. To the just, they are as Paradise; for they feel how sweet it is to suffer for God; acquiescing in His most holy will, they realize the meaning of those words of the Apostle: *I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation.* 2 Cor. vii. 4.

Tribulations have the effect of—I. making us think of our salvation;—II. of making us strive for it;—III. of putting within our reach an easy means of attaining it—means of expiation;—IV. and of giving us moral certainty regarding it.

Through afflictions—I. God teaches us,—II. God proves us.

The cross is the way of salvation.—I. the safest ;—II. the shortest, since after a few days it leads to an eternal crown ;—III. the way that most have gone, because it was trodden by all the Saints.

In tribulations :—I. God shows His greatest love for us ; —II. and we in return, if we bear them as we ought, can best repay that love.

In tribulations a true Christian rejoices :—I. Because he is sustained by faith ;—II. because he is lifted up by hope ; —III. because he is animated by charity. *In a work that is loved*, says S. Augustine (*De bono viduit*, c. 21), *we cannot be said to labour, because the labour itself is love*. And again (*In Joan.* Tract. 48, n. 1) he says : *He who loves does not labour*. . . . And the Apostle says : *Charity beareth all things . . . endureth all things*. 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

The cross must be borne patiently :—I. Because patience lightens present sorrows ;—II. and stores up future reward.

There are in particular two all necessary Christian virtues—it is no use to speak of them to worldlings, because they would not understand—which spring from the cross and thrive on adversities, and these are :—I. humility, and—II. penance.

THE CROSS.—(Continued).**PATIENCE AND MEEKNESS IN BEARING IT.**

Take up my yoke upon you, and learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart : and you shall find rest to your souls.—Matth. xi. 29.

WE have already seen in the preceding sermon that the cross, the sweet yoke of Christ, must be borne by each and every Christian. In practice what does that mean? Simply this: we must preserve *patience* and *Christian meekness*. . . . These twin virtues, which are intimately connected, render the Christian man like to his model, the meek and patient Jesus, the Lamb of God, who took the cross upon His shoulders, and, preserving the while sweetness on His sad face and opening not His mouth, carried it to Calvary and there died for us. . . .

We shall, therefore, speak of these twin virtues, and shall consider them under three headings:

I. The meaning of them.

II. The motives underlying them.

III. The practice of them.

I.

PATIENCE.

I. Meaning.

What is patience? What its object? How many are its grades?

1°. Patience is a virtue which is connected with the third cardinal virtue, namely, fortitude, and consists in the habit of bearing adversities. It can be defined as a *Virtue which moderates grief arising from evils that are present, and which leads us to bear them with resignation.*

2°. Patience has as its object crosses of every kind, that is, all adversities, and all things that are opposed to the desires and inclinations of our human nature. . . These are various : (1) some are from within, and some from without ; (2) at one time, they are sorrows, passions, and weariness of spirit . . . at another time, they are bodily afflictions and sickness . . . again, humiliations and ignominies . . . and sometimes deprivations and loss of temporal goods ; . . (3) some proceed from the hand of nature, and others from the injustice of man ; . . (4) some consist in fulfilling our duties, others in bearing afflictions ; . . (5) at times people are opposed to us, and not infrequently our business and affairs go wrong ; . . (6) now it is our honour, now our health, again, perhaps, it is a question of fortune, or some friend who has played us false, and so on, for such is life : *Man born of a woman, living for a short time, is filled with many miseries.* Job. xiv. 1.

3°. There are three grades of patience :—(1) the patience of *compulsion*, according to which one looks upon the cross as an evil, but an evil that must be borne—than which there is nothing more miserable. This is the feeling of the criminal who goes to prison, and the slave who has to take his punishment. This grade excludes only resistance, simply because it would be useless. (2) There is the patience of *voluntary*

resignation, by which one receives the cross as a remedy from the hand of God. We have a parallel to this in the case of a sick man who willingly drinks a bitter medicine which he has in his power to refuse. This grade puts away complaint or murmuring, while cherishing the desire to be well. (3) Then finally there is the patience of *delight*, where one, regarding the cross as a treasure, receives it with joy from the hand of a loving God. In this spirit the Apostles *went rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus*. Acts, v. 41. . . The first grade might be designated the patience of fear; the second the patience of hope; the third the patience of love. . .

II. Motives.

1°. First, the necessity. . . Patience is a virtue which holds a high and essential place in the Christian religion. *Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into his glory*. Luke, xxiv. 26. . . *The disciple is not above his master*. Luke, vi. 40. . . *Patience is necessary for us*. Heb. x. 36.

And not only is it necessary for salvation by necessity of means and precept, but it is likewise the decree of nature. For who can escape adversities? Even the pagans said: *It is a cruel fate; patience only can lighten what may not be endured*. Horace, Odes i. 24, 18-19. . . Whoever wishes to live in peace here, and to merit happiness for hereafter, should make *a virtue of necessity*. For mortals all, so long as they live in this world, sail in the same boat of misery, and are buffeted by the same waves of adversity. . .

2°. Its excellence and utility. . . Our blessed Lord, in order to teach man the best lesson he could learn, chose the cross: *Christ suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow his steps*. 1 Pet. ii. 21. . . The Apostles *went from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus*. Acts v. 41. . . *Whom the lord loveth, he chastiseth*. Hebr. xii. 6. *My brethren, count it all joy, when you shall fall*

into divers temptations. . . . Patience hath a perfect work.
 James i. 2, 4. . . *Power is made perfect in infirmity.*
 2 Cor. xii. 9.

Patience is useful to all, to both sinners and the just. *We deserve to suffer these things, because we have sinned against our brother.* Gen. xlii. 21. . . . *Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee.* Luke, xv. 18. . . . *Vexation alone shall make you understand what you hear.* Isaias, xxviii. 19. . . . *In your patience you shall possess your souls.* Luke, xxi. 19. . . . *Bring forth fruit in patience.* Luke, viii. 15.

3°. It brings forth fruit, and gains us merit. *Going they went and wept, casting their seeds; but coming they shall come with joyfulness, carrying their sheaves.* Ps. cxxv. 6, 7. . . . And S. Paul says: *That which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory.* 2 Cor. iv. 17.

4°. It begets peace and joy. . . . *Thy peace shall be in much patience* Imit. iii. 25. . . . *I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation.* 2 Cor. vii. 4.

5°. And can show success in works: *The patient man is more successful than the valiant; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh cities.* Prov. xvi. 32.

6°. And, finally, it satisfies for sin, merits for us God's gifts, makes for progress in virtue, and edifies our neighbour.

III. Practice.

1°. Acts of patience both internal and external must be elicited.

2°. With a view to this, prayer, on the one hand, will help us much, and, on the other, the will should be brought strongly to bear in facing contradictions of all kinds, small as well as great—pin-pricks and sword-thrusts of the spirit. In particular we should exercise patience in regard to the petty inconveniences of life. If we cannot put up with small things, how shall we endure the great? *If thou hast been wearied with running with footmen, how canst thou contend with horses?* Jerem. xii. 5.

3°. We should imitate the example of Christ, and His Saints. *Let us run by patience to the fight proposed to us, looking on Jesus. . . . Think diligently upon Him . . . that you be not wearied, fainting in your minds.* Hebr. xii. 2, 3. . . . *Abimelech, taking an axe, he cut down the bough of a tree, and laying it on his shoulders, said to his companions: What you see me do, do you out of hand.* Judges, ix. 48.

4°. S. Teresa, lover of tribulations, had ever three things before her mind—her sins, heaven, and Christ crucified. . . .

5°. And Job, the man of patience, had only the future life to look to: *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth; and I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God; whom I myself shall see, and my eyes shall behold, and not another; this my hope is laid up in my bosom.* Job, xix. 25, 27. . . . Hence the Church admonishes us that, amidst all the vicissitudes of life, *our hearts should be fixed where true joy reigns.*—Yet a little time and your sorrow shall be turned into joy. John, xvi. 20.

II

MEEKNESS.

I. Meaning.

1°. Meekness pertains to the fourth cardinal virtue, namely, temperance, and may be defined to be a virtue which restrains anger within the bounds of reason. A meek man is one who is master of himself, who possesses his soul in peace and, in every word and action, restrains himself from unreasonable anger and impatience.

2°. Not all anger, however, is inordinate and opposed to meekness ; but that only which exceeds the rule of reason. And the rule of reason is that anger should be permitted to rise only subject to its control, and should be indulged merely to the extent that is legitimate, opportune, and proportionate to the fault that called it forth. But we can see at once how easily the boundary can be passed, inasmuch as man is prone to anger. Here meekness steps in, raising a warning finger, and sprinkling cool drops of reason on the heated soul. . . .

II. Motives.

1°. Meekness is necessary to every Christian, especially to one who is placed over others ; for, without it, he cannot be a follower of Him who said : *Learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart.* Matth. xi. 29.

2°. A man given to anger (1) is not rational, because he refuses to follow reason ; (2) is not a Christian, because he does not imitate Christ, the meek Lamb and gentle King (Matth. xxi. 5) ; (3) neither can he be a spiritual man, because he cannot possess the spirit of prayer, which presupposes a serene mind.

3°. We read in Sacred Scripture that meekness is recommended both by Christ, and His Apostles. The second beatitude of the Master deals with meekness : *Blessed are the meek ; for they shall possess the land.* Matth. x. 4. And S. Paul says : *The servant of the Lord must not wrangle, but be mild towards all men.* 2 Tim. ii. 24.

4°. Meekness conquers anger in others, and subdues them ; it converts enemies into friends ; while at the same time it preserves peace in one's own breast : *A mild answer breaketh wrath.* Prov. xv. 1. *Fire,* says S. Chrysostom, *does not extinguish fire ; but what water is to fire, that meekness is to anger.*

5°. God, in governing the world, *reacheth from end to end mightily and ordereth all things sweetly.* Wisdom, viii. 1. And of His servant Moses we read : *Moses was a man exceeding meek above all men that dwelt upon earth.* Num. xii. 3. So too

was David, the man after God's own heart ; the man who was able to say of himself : *O Lord, remember David, and all his meekness.* Ps. cxxxii. 1. And S. Gregory says : *Nothing is difficult to the humble, and nothing is hard to the meek.*

6°. Many and great are the dire effects of anger ; for it begets scandals, and enmities, and evils innumerable. To use a few illustrations from life : a spoonful of honey will attract more bees than a barrel of vinegar ; birds may be coaxed by a voice soft and low, but are frightened by noise ; the sun and dew fertilising the earth symbolise meekness, whilst, on the other hand, torrents and tempests and lightnings and all things that break and destroy, are an example and counterpart of anger.

III. Practice.

1°. Meekness should shine forth, after the manner and example of our Blessed Lord, in look, in heart, in every word, and in every work. . . It should be exercised towards all persons, even the wicked ; at all times, and in all circumstances, however difficult and trying. . .

2°. But, in particular, this virtue should be in evidence, whenever correction has to be given or received. . . He who is about to give correction should imagine himself in the place of him who is to be corrected, that he may the better understand, how, when, and how far, he should act—in manner, *as if a nurse should cherish her children.* 1 Thess. ii. 7.

3°. Means. (1) To prepare oneself beforehand by foreseeing, and then accepting, in prayer and resignation before God, the troubles and worries of life. *Foreseen arrows wound less.* (2) To reflect on the meekness of Christ . . . the martyrs . . . and all the saints. . . (3) To recall one's own sins and faults, towards our neighbour and towards God. . .

4°. Silence . . . Delay . . . Sleep soothes the soul. . .

5°. *Brethren, and if a man be overtaken in any fault, you, who are spiritual, instruct such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.* Gal. vi. 1.

Conclusion. Let us, therefore, embrace the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ in patience and meekness, and we shall find rest for our souls. Of ourselves, however, we cannot possess these heavenly virtues. We look for them from the hand of Him who is at once our Creator, our Redeemer and our Model—to Him who has said: *Learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart.*

GRACE AND ITS CHANNELS, PRAYER AND THE SACRAMENTS.

And we saw his glory, the glory as it were of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. . . . Of his fulness we all have received, and grace for grace.
—John, i. 14-16.

He that is mighty hath done great things to me ; and holy is his name.—Luke, i. 49.

Grace is a divine influx, which comes to us principally through two channels, prayer and the sacraments. The three are closely united ; but, in view of their importance, we shall treat each separately.

I.

GRACE.

Many and ineffable are the mysteries which God has dispensed to Adam's race ; but the sum and compendium of all is summed up in a single word, and that word is—*grace*.

Man, of his own nature, is an earthly being, with no right to anything higher than this world affords. But by grace he is elevated to a state beyond his natural powers ; a state wherein his destiny is to see God face to face. What the Psalmist (Ps. cxii.) says of the poor and needy can, in an eminent degree, be applied here : *Raising up the needy from the earth, and lifting up the poor out of the dung-hill ; that he may place them with princes, with the princes of his people.*

This great work of grace has two parts : preparation and consummation ; or sanctification and glory.—The former is the elevation of man in process (*in fieri*), the latter, in fact ; the one takes place in this life, and is called the *operation of grace*, the other, in the future life, and is the *end*, and, in a

manner, the *crowning* of grace. The two parts can be named in terms of each other, *grace being glory in exile, and glory grace at home.* (Faber).

Of glory in exile, that is, of grace that is given to man as wayfarer on earth, we shall here speak ; and shall discuss it under three heads :

ACTUAL GRACE.

HABITUAL GRACE.

MERIT.

ACTUAL GRACE.

I. What is Actual Grace ?

II. How far is it necessary ?

III. How great is its power ?

I. What is Actual Grace ?

1°. Briefly, it is a *gift* of God : but no ordinary gift ; it is a gift *by excellence* ; a supernatural gift, surpassing all natural gifts, such as creation, birth, and fortune, which, in comparison, are only as dust or clay ; it is a *gift* of God, coming directly down from the three Persons of the Holy Trinity ; but in a special manner attributed to the Holy Spirit, because conferred by His operation. . . .

2°. It is a gift so truly divine that it is in a manner the splendour and irradiation of God's face shining on the creature. . . .

3°. Viewed in itself, and defined in terms of its essence, actual grace is an *influx of God on the soul of man with a view to his sanctification*.

4°. That influx comes in the nature of *help*: help (either *elevating* or *strengthening*) given for sanctification, in order that man may acquire, preserve and increase sanctifying grace.

5°. And that help comes to man in a fourfold way: (1) by illuminating the mind; (2) by stimulating the will; (3) by strengthening one's powers; (4) by elevating the action.

6°. Actual grace is variously distinguished, but principally as *external* and *internal* grace. External grace, for instance, is the word which the divine mercy addresses to us through preaching, by good example, and by tribulations. . . . Internal grace is the secret word which God speaks to our heart. . . . It happens as a rule that the two go together: when the external word strikes, the hidden word is whispering too.

7°. Actual grace is called by many names, all which are useful, for they give us a clearer and more comprehensive idea of its nature, its characteristics, and the variety of ways in which it influences us. It is called grace,—the grace of Christ,—the grace of the Holy Spirit—the help of God,—the power, the light, the strength, the call, the voice of God;—it is likewise called the shower, the dew, the living water,—the food and bread of the soul;—also: illumination, inspiration, and divine attraction. And in Sacred Scripture it is referred to, or included, in such texts as the following: *You, who by the POWER of God are kept by faith unto salvation.* 1 Pet. i. 5:—*He that followeth me walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life.* John, viii. 12.—*I called, and you refused.* Prov. i. 24. *To-day if you shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts.* Ps. xciv. 8. *No man can come to me, except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him.* John, vi, 44.

8°. What is actual grace figuratively considered? It is illustrated by many symbols, types and figures, which go to set forth its nature, and characteristics. For instance: it is the three-fold appearance of the Holy Spirit, under the form

of a bright cloud, that of a dove, and of wind and fire ; it is figured in the curing of the man born blind (John, ix), and of the man who was cured only by degrees—each illustrating the effect of instant or gradual co-operation with grace ; we have a symbol of it in the raising of Lazarus (John, xi), and the cure of the paralytic (John, v. 6) ; it can be compared to the formation of Adam's body, before it received the breath of life (Gen. ii. 7). It is like to the ploughing and harrowing of the soil, before the seed is sown, as also to the subsequent care of the seed.—Peter walking on the water and sustained by the hand of Christ is a figure that applies. Matth. xiv. 31. —Again it may be described as the act by which the divine husbandman grafts a wild olive-branch into a good olive-tree (Rom. xi. 24) ; the preparation of wood for fire ; and, finally, it is like to the star that led the Magi to the crib of Christ.

As to how the soul, by actual grace, is prepared and led to sanctifying grace, we have a vivid example in the vision of the resurrection of dry bones in Ezechiel, xxxvii : *The hand of the Lord was upon me, and brought me forth in the spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of a plain that was full of bones. And he led me about through them on every side ; now they were very many on the face of the plain, and they were exceeding dry. And he said to me : Son of man, dost thou think these bones shall live ? And I answered : O Lord God, thou knowest. And he said to me : Prophecy concerning these bones ; and say to them : Ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God to these bones : Behold, I will send spirit into you, and you shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to grow over you, and will cover you with skin : and I will give you spirit and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the Lord. And I prophesied as he had commanded me : and as I prophesied there was a noise, and behold a commotion : and the bones came together, each one to its joint. And I saw, and behold the sinews, and the flesh came upon them : and the skin was stretched out over them, but there was no spirit in them. And he said to me : Prophecy to the spirit, prophecy, O son of man, and say to the spirit : Thus saith the Lord God : Come, spirit, from the four*

winds, and blow upon these slain, and let them live again. And I prophesied as he had commanded me; and the spirit came into them, and they lived.

9°. What is actual grace in regard to habitual or sanctifying grace?—It is as a means to an end; it is—to use an example—what tillage is to the harvest. . . . It can be considered in one or other of two ways: (1) either *antecedently to sanctifying grace* or (2) *concomitantly*; in other words, as given to one in sin, or to one in the friendship of God. In the former case, it leads to the acquiring, and, as it were, the birth, of sanctifying grace; in the latter, it preserves and augments it. . . .

II. How far is Actual Grace necessary?

1°. The Pelagians, in the fifth century, said that grace was not necessary, and that man could attain salvation without it. But they were condemned by the Church, which, through the mouth of Pope Zosimus, and by the Fathers of the second Council of Orange, declared their teaching heretical.

2°. What light is to the eyes that they may see; what strength is to the feet that they may walk; what food and drink are to the body that it may live; what respiration is to the lungs that they may oxygenate the blood; what a boat is for sailing; what a ladder is for ascending; what wings are for flying—that grace is to the soul. The soul without grace is as the earth without heat and moisture, as a tree without roots, as a man without sight, as the sick without medicine, as the poor without alms, as a captive without a liberator, as an infant without a mother's care.

3°. For a person lying asleep and sick at the bottom of an abyss, two things are necessary for his escape (1) that he be aroused, and (2) assisted to go forth. . . . So in the spiritual world, man lies asleep and infirm in the abyss of his own misery. But grace comes (1) as the voice of God rousing and inviting him, (2) as the hand of God stretched out to lift him up.

4°. Actual grace is necessary, as we have seen, to the life of the soul—that the soul may gain, and gaining may preserve, and preserving may augment, sanctifying grace. . . . This, human power cannot do of itself: as well look for grapes on thorns, figs on thistles, and fruit on non-fruit-bearing trees. . . . It is necessary for a sinner, in order that he may rise, and, having risen, may not relapse. It is necessary for the just man, that he may resist temptations, perform good works, and thus be justified more and more. In a word, it is necessary for every man and for every age, for it is only by means of it the soul lives, moves, and has its supernatural being. . . .

III. How great is the power of Actual Grace?

1°. First, we shall hear S. Paul speak: *I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me.* Phil. iv. 13. And again: *By the grace of God, I am what I am. . . . I have laboured more abundantly than all they: yet not I, but the grace of God with me.* I Cor. xv. 10.

2°. And why not? seeing that the help of grace is nothing else than the omnipotent hand of God stretched out to aid us. *The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the protector of my life: of whom shall I be afraid? . . . If armies in camp should stand together against me, my heart shall not fear. If a battle should rise up against me, in this will I be confident.* Ps. xxvi. 3.

3°. Grace gives *power*, yes also *facility*, to do all things: to conquer temptations,—and bad habits; to extirpate vice; to keep the commandments; to perform good works; to bear one's cross; to endure labours and sorrows; to forgive injuries and love one's enemies. Nay more, it gives joy in the midst of battle and tribulations: *I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation.* 2 Cor. vii. 4. . . . And they that heard it said: *who then can be saved? He (Jesus) said to them: the things that are impossible with men, are possible with God.* Luke, xviii. 27 (See Mark x. 27, and preceding).

4°. All which shines forth in the examples given us by the Saints. Some emerged from great sins . . . some performed bitter penances . . . some, even down to old age, flung themselves into every sacrifice and work of charity.—The Apostles were changed into other men; the martyrs, like S. Laurence, suffered indescribable torments.—Many persons, this very day, in the midst of the allurements of sin, are true to conscience, are true to God; and, in the midst of a wicked and perverse nation, shine as lights to the world. . . And wherefore all this? By what strength? Their own? No: *Not I, but the grace of God with me.*

5°. Whence the constancy of the mother of the Machabees, and her children before King Antiochus? Whence the magnanimity of the three children, Sidrach, Misach, and Abdenago in presence of Nebuchodonosor? Was it not from the grace of God, which strengthened them against sin; just as, a little later, His omnipotent hand saved those same children in the fiery furnace; as also Daniel in the lions' den?

6°. Do we wish to be saved from the fiery furnace of vice, and from the lions of passion? Then two things are necessary: (1) that we do not plunge into danger (it should be remembered that the children were in the furnace, and Daniel in the den, against their will);—(2) and, secondly, it is necessary that we do not oppose, but rather earnestly co-operate with, grace. . .

Conclusion. For all these reasons, grace should be sought after and cherished. And how sought after? The fountain is God's mercy, and we tap that fountain by prayer and the sacraments. Of these we shall speak a little later.

OTHER FORMS.

There are three things about actual grace which it is most useful for us to consider : I. How many kinds of this grace are there? Two : internal and external . . . II. What are the chief actual graces given to us? 1°. Some are common, and are intended for all men : The Incarnation of the Word, the gospel message, and the sacraments. . . 2°. Some are special to each one, such as : birth from Christian parents, faith, education, the word of God, good example, and internal promptings of the Holy Spirit. . . III. How should we respond to them? With gratitude and generosity. —Grace should be looked upon as most precious, should be received with gratitude, and diligently co-operated with.

I. How is grace acquired?—R. It is acquired either immediately, through the merits of course of Jesus Christ, or, for the most part, through prayer, the sacraments, and other good works : for these too a grace is necessary ; but this latter—called in theology by the name *sufficient* grace—is always present. The giving of grace either immediately or mediately might be illustrated by an example from life—it is as if a rich man should come to the aid of one who is starving, by giving him bread at once, or money to buy it.— II. How is grace *impeded*?—R. We have an example in what may happen in the case of an alms—the alms may not be asked for, or refused, or thrown away, or received with ingratitude. We know what would be the result in each case : the same holds true in the spiritual order. . .

How can man act towards grace? In a fourfold manner : I. He can impede it,—II. resist it,—III. abuse it,—IV. or use it well, so that it will produce fruit.

The use of grace. I. What is the good use of grace?—II. What is the abuse of it?—III. What effects follow in each case?—He who uses grace well, that is, he who follows the invitations of God, and, as it were, spreads a sail before the wind that the Holy Spirit sends, renders himself worthy to receive still greater gifts. If he be a sinner, he soon becomes justified, will be by degrees delivered from the slavery of his vices, then he will flourish in virtue, and at last will attain to glory : *he shall be like a tree which is planted near the running waters, which shall bring forth its fruit in due season.* Ps. i. 3.--On the other hand, He who neglects grace and renders void the most precious gifts of God, even though he be at present justified, shall by degrees fall away, and wither like a shrub in the desert ; or he shall be like to a man without food ; or a fire that is not supplied with fuel.

I. How does grace operate in us?—II. How should we co-operate with it?

I. How does grace move us?—II. How, on the other hand, does nature inimical to grace solicit us?—III. Which impulse should we follow?

¹ See A Kempis, i. iii. c. 54.

SANCTIFYING GRACE.

FIRST DISCOURSE.

- I. What is Sanctifying Grace ?
- II. By what names is it known ?
- III. What are its effects on the soul ?
- IV. What are its symbols and images ?

I. What is Sanctifying Grace ?

1°. It is a *supernatural gift of God permanently inhering in the soul, by which one immediately and formally is rendered holy, just, a friend of God, an adopted son of God, heir according to hope of eternal happiness, and capable of eliciting works that merit an eternal reward.* . . It is also defined as *the supernatural life of the soul*, which definition is founded on the text: *I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly.* John, x. 10. It gets many names in Sacred Scripture ; but the one most frequently used is that of **LIFE**.

2°. Sanctifying grace is indeed a *certain kind of life*, namely supernatural life, a life that is added to our natural life, and is analogous to it.—Accordingly, with a view to understanding the life of grace, we shall at the same time consider natural life.

What in general is life?—Life is the *principle of action immanent in a being*: that is, the principle or the source by which action so proceeds from an agent that it is received by that very agent and remains with that agent: thus, for example, thought in human mind.

There is a twofold life : *natural* and *supernatural*. Natural life may be *vegetable*, *animal*, or *intellectual*. A few words as to each. (1) *Vegetable* life, such as we see in plants, manifests itself in three ways : *growth*, *nutrition*, and *reproduction*. (2) *Animal* life superadds two things to vegetable life, namely, sense feeling, and local motion, that is, power to move from place to place. Again sensibility may be either *apprehensive*, and as such acts through the five senses as its organ, or *appetitive*, consisting in attraction or repulsion to something external.—(3) *Intellectual* life is that which finds expression through intellect and will. Of this life there are three grades, according as it is viewed in man, in angel, or in God.

Although we have considered life under the three aspects already stated, still it should be borne in mind that the full and perfect concept of life is realised only in intellectual beings. In God of course it exists in ultimate perfection, that perfection consisting in the fact that God is all sufficient in Himself, and is not dependent on anything extrinsic—action in God is immanent, the principle by which He acts is immanent, the end for which He acts is immanent.

Supernatural life is a certain participation in the life of God, which is granted to intellectual creatures, by which they become like to God, and act through intellect and will in a certain divine way.

Supernatural life is twofold : (1) life of *grace*, which is the first grade, and the beginning of life in God ; (2) life of *glory*, which is the second grade, and perfection of life in God. Through either grade a creature becomes transformed and beautified in soul, and his works become holy : there is this difference, however, that in one case we see as through a glass in a dark manner, and in the other face to face. . . .

II. By what names is Sanctifying Grace known ?

It is called life,—adoption,—birth,—justification,—justice,—holiness,—charity,—participation in the divine nature,—gold on fire,—light,—fire,—liberty,—union with Christ,—

the seed of God,—the living fountain,—oil and unction,—new creature,—new man,—celestial man. .

III. What are its effects on the soul ?

1°. Through it we are made partakers in the divine nature ; we become pleasing to God, and enjoy His friendship . . . we become adopted sons of God . . . we become just and sanctified . . .—By it the soul is vivified . . . and adorned with heavenly beauty . . . and enriched from the divine treasury. . .

2°. There is, accordingly, an essential difference between a man in sanctifying grace, and one without it. This difference will be manifested in the future life ; but it is hidden here. It is the difference that exists between light and darkness ; between a precious stone and a lump of coal. . . . We can further illustrate it : it is the difference between a dead man or lifeless statue, and a person alive but sleeping ;—it is the difference between a fruit-bearing tree as it appears in winter, and a barren tree ;—between a field in which good seed is sown, and one without it, or containing only the seed of weeds and thorns ;—it is the difference between two closed pixes, one of which contains gold, and the other worthless stones ;—it is the difference between incense and common clay, until both are burned ;—the difference between two sleeping men, of whom one is blind and lame, and the other with senses and limbs entire ;—the difference between a palace and hut while as yet both are covered with snow . . . as also between a fertile and sterile field ;—the difference between a lamp full of oil, and one without it, until both are lighted ;—between a body charged with electricity and one unelectrified ;—between an educated and illiterate man until they take a book in hands ;—between a man and a brute asleep in a garden—on awaking one admires the flowers, but the other tramples on them ;—it is the difference that exists between gold and clay, between a lily and hay, until the sun rises, and shows them as they are. . .

IV. What are its symbols and images ?

Many images occur to the mind by which the nature and properties, and various effects of sanctifying grace may be illustrated. The following are some :

1°. Life in plants,—in animals,—and in man, which life is not seen except in its effects . . . and without which, a tree, for instance, would become a dried log, and man would be a corpse. . .

2°. An acorn, in which life lies hidden ;—a field which, in its womb of clay, contains seed that will one day break forth into a golden harvest. . .

3°. An heir as a child, not yet differing from a servant. Gal. iv. 1. . . . *Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God ; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like to him.* 1 John, iii. 2.

4°. The Lord Jesus, the king of glory, hiding Himself under the veil of humility, of ignominy, and of suffering . . . growing from infancy into manhood . . . emitting no rays of glory except on Thabor ; but unceasingly emitting rays of works . . . until, the tabernacle of His body having been broken on the cross, He proceeded in glory from the sepulchre. . .

5°. The pitchers of Gedeon, which when broken, the lights within them shone. Judges, vii. 16.

6°. The sacraments, particularly the Blessed Eucharist, which under visible species contains invisible life. . .

7°. The healing of Naaman,—the giving sight to the blind,—the resurrection of the dead, as related in the Gospel,—the Apostles on the day of Pentecost changed into new men,—the conversion of S. Paul,—Adam animated by the breath of God,—the dry bones called back to life, as related in Ezechiel, xxxvii.

8°. Light shining through an alabaster vase, and, as it were, transforming it into light. . .

9°. The fire that penetrates iron, and in a manner transforms it into its own essence.

10°. A fire which lies dormant under cinders until it is fed with wood. . . .

11°. Oil in a lamp before it is lighted. . . .

12°. Gold, and wood, and stones, indistinguishable at night, but appearing what they are, when the sun rises.

13°. *All the glory of the king's daughter is within in golden borders. . . . The queen stood on the right hand in gilded clothing.* Ps. xliv. *Black (externally) as the tents of Cedar, as the curtains of Solomon.* Cantic. i. 4.

14°. The tabernacle of the Old Law, ornamented within with gold and purple,—without, covered with curtains of goat's hair. Exod. xxxvi. 14.

15°. The face of Moses shining from his conversation with God, but covered so as not to awe the Israelites. Exod. xxxiv. 30-33.

16°. *You are the temple of the living God.* 2 Cor. vi. 16. . . . The soul in sanctifying grace may further be compared to a stained-glass window, of which the beauty is all within, when the light comes streaming through it.

17°. Joseph taken out of prison, and made a prince. . . .

18°. A king wearing a cloak over his robes of state, until he puts aside the cloak and appears in regal splendour. . . .

19°. A statue or picture as yet in the hands of the artist : when he has finished, the beauty of the work of art will be manifest to the eyes of all. . . . Or a golden statue covered with canvas. . . .

20°. Precious wood while growing within common bark. . . .

21°. The flower of the rose while wrapped in the bud : with time and sunshine its beauty will appear.

22°. Fruit while yet in blossom, and grain hidden in the stalk : after a time they will ripen. . . .

23°. Or we might suppose the case of a child who is brought up in a cave. It has eyes, ears and all its senses ; but sees only by means of a blinking lamp, hears only the sound of its own groaning, knows the taste of only bread and water. . . . Not for such a narrow range were senses given to it. . . . What then if it should be brought suddenly into sunshine and the enjoyment of all that minister to the

senses? Yet such is only a feeble example of the soul when the glory springing from sanctifying grace breaks upon it. . . .

24°. It is like to a branch cut from the wild olive-tree and grafted into the good olive-tree; or a branch grafted into the vine, and made partaker of the root. . . . *Thou wert cut out of the wild olive-tree, and contrary to nature, wert grafted into the good olive-tree . . . and art made partaker of the root, and of the fatness of the olive-tree.* Rom. xi. 24, 17. —*I am the vine; you are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit.* John, xv. 5.

SANCTIFYING GRACE.

SECOND DISCOURSE.

I. How great is Sanctifying Grace ?

II. How is it manifested ?

III. What does it demand of us ?

I. How great is Sanctifying Grace ?

1°. It is impossible to describe it, inasmuch as it is the most divine of all the operations of God in the soul of man. . . .

2°. Its excellence is pre-eminent in comparison with other works. Sanctifying grace, or, what is the same, justification of man, surpasses even the creation of the world. . . .

3°. Even the works of the supernatural order, the Incarnation of the Son of God, His Passion, and all that flow from it, the Church and the sacraments, all have, in a manner, as their end the justification of the human soul: *Who for us men and for our salvation descended from heaven. . . . I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly.* John, x. 10.

4°. It so transcends all the treasures of the natural world, that neither the riches of earth, nor the splendours of the firmament can be compared with it—to it they are as a grain of sand. . . . Sanctifying grace is, as it were, a gem which God takes from His crown to adorn a creature. . . .

5°. So precious is it that the Son of God, in order to acquire it for us, did not hesitate to pay the price of His blood. . . .

6°. In order to understand its excellence as far as it is possible for us, it will be helpful to consider, according to the teaching of faith, what sanctifying grace is in itself and in its effects; also the names by which it is called, and the symbols and images under which it is known. (See last discourse).

II. How is it manifested?

It is partly manifested in this life; it will be fully manifested in the future.

1°. As to the present life, grace remains invisible so long as man is clothed in mortal flesh: it is as a fire hidden beneath cinders, or as a treasure in an earthen jar. Still it is manifested to a certain extent even here, for instance in holy works: just as we know life to be in a body by its actions, and in a tree through its fruit. . .—In a just man, seeing, hearing, speech and movement . . . are holy: *Our conversation is in heaven.* Phil. iii. 20.—Grace produces the fruit of good works—of penance, flight from sin, patience, mercy, piety. . . It likewise produces the fruit of merit, by enabling us to lay up treasures for heaven, as men generally lay up treasures for earth. . . And that same care to gather celestial riches is at once a sign and a clear manifestation of present grace, for Christ has said: *Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.* Luke, xii. 34.¹

2°. It will be manifested in the future life: (1) in the first resurrection, at the hour of death, in the revelation that will come to the children of God. Rom. viii. 19. (2) In the second resurrection, on the last day, when *this mortal hath put on immortality, when Jesus Christ will reform the body of our lowliness, made like to the body of his glory.* Phil. iii. 21. . . Then will it shine with a celestial splendour and with a glory in a manner divine; then will a change take place more wonderful than that which the poet fancied when he sang of a hut that was transformed into a temple of gold. . .

¹See theology on *Charity*, and the signs of *Charity* and *Grace* in the soul.

III. What does it demand of us ?

1°. That we appreciate it at its true value,—that we guard it,—and that we augment it. .

2°. That one bear oneself as a son of God, and heir to His kingdom.—What if a king should say to a poor man : it is in your power to share with me my throne and my sceptre, on condition that you begin to live as becomes a king ! . . Wherefore it is incumbent on you to leave your old ways ; to don the dress and assume the manners of a prince, and to live in a royal palace. . . Would such conditions be rejected ? . .

3°. And why is the treasure of grace not appreciated at its proper price ? All through ignorance : it is the case of an heir to a kingdom who, while a child, prefers an apple to a sceptre, because he has not yet come to know its value. . .

4°. If only grace were known, the soul would say of it, in the words of Wisdom : *I preferred her before kingdoms and thrones, and esteemed riches nothing in comparison of her. Neither did I compare unto her any precious stones : for all gold in comparison of her, is as a little sand, and silver in respect to her shall be counted as clay. I loved her above health and beauty, and chose to have her instead of light : for her light cannot be put out. Now all good things came to me together with her. . .* Wisdom, vii. 8, and following.

OTHER FORMS.

I. How is Sanctifying Grace invisible?—II. How is it manifested?

I. How does a man having Sanctifying Grace differ from one who is without it?—II. How will this difference be manifested?

I. What is the nature of Sanctifying Grace?—II. What are its effects?—III. What its cause and origin?

I. How beautiful in the eyes of God is a soul in Sanctifying Grace?—II. How hideous if deprived of it?

I. How is Sanctifying Grace acquired?—II. How is it lost and recovered?—III. How is it preserved and augmented?

I. What are the signs of its presence in the soul?—II. What are its operations?—III. What its future consummation?

I. Is Sanctifying Grace equal in all men? *Star differeth from star in glory.* 1 Cor. xv. 41.—II. What grades of difference can be distinguished? ¹

¹ See theology.

I. Which are the various classes of men in regard to Sanctifying Grace?—II. Whence, in many, the contempt of this treasure?

I. *We have this treasure in earthen vessels.* 2 Cor. iv. 7.—II. *You, who, by thy power of God are kept by faith unto salvation.* 1 Pet. i. 5.

MERIT.¹

I. What is Merit ?

II. What is the object of Merit ?

III. What are its conditions ?

I. What is Merit ?

1°. Merit in general is defined as a *title to some retribution, which is usually named a premium or reward.*

2°. The principle or beginning of merit is some good work, which has worth proportionate to the reward.—Similarly the principle of demerit is a bad or evil work, or defect. . . .

3°. We distinguish a twofold merit, namely, human and divine, that is, merit amongst men, and merit with God. . . .

4°. Merit with God or supernatural merit, of which we shall here speak, can be defined as: *A good work done in God's service, and deserving supernatural reward.*—Again we distinguish the *merit of Christ*, and the *merit of a Christian*. The former is *essential* merit; the latter *participated* merit.

Essential merit is founded on the dignity and infinite excellence of the person of Christ. Participated merit has indeed true power of meriting; but it borrows or draws that power from the person of Christ, to whom the Christian is united by justification, as a branch is grafted on the vine. . . .

5°. Faith teaches that we can merit from God. The doctrine of the Council of Trent is that the just, by good works, performed from grace, really merit an increase of sanctifying grace, eternal life, and an increase of glory.²

¹ See theology, *De Gratia*, and *De Merito*.

² See theology, *De Merito*.

6°. Our merit is explained by the parable of the labourers whom the householder hired, and sent into his vineyard. Matth. xx. 1. . . Also our merit is as the grapes which grow on the branches that are grafted on the vine—Christ being the vine, we the branches. John, xv.

7°. What is the difference between merit amongst men, and merit with God?—(1) Amongst men the labour is frequently severe, and the reward little or none. . . Frequently also those who are undeserving get the reward.

. . . Always, even though the reward should be equitably given, it is at best only temporal, and will soon perish. . .

(2) With God it is quite different. . .

8°. Akin to merit is the gaining of indulgences¹; nevertheless, the two must not be confounded.

II. What is the object of merit?

In other words, what can we merit?

1°. We can merit eternal life, and an increase of grace: that is, heaven, a throne in heaven, a throne in excellence and splendour beyond words to describe. . .—We can merit riches and treasures that will not pass away: *Lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven.* Matth. vi. 20.

2°. We can merit the help of actual grace, through prayer, and other good works, in which God is ever ready to assist us. In fact the grace which God gives us is like to a seed, which, if carefully sown and nourished, produces other seeds, and becomes multiplied in a wonderful degree.—*It is the divine way*, says Lessius, *to give gratis the beginnings of virtues to the unworthy and indisposed; but beyond that He will not go, except in case of those who dispose and render themselves fit: so that in proportion as one uses grace already given, will one receive additional and still more abundant graces.*

3°. Although a sinner, strictly speaking, cannot merit to rise again after he has fallen, still he can send up his petition, and God in His goodness is ready to hearken to his

¹ See Council of Trent, Sess. 6, cap. 16. Also theology, *De Indulg.*

appeal ; this, however, is only while he is on earth. But one thing should be borne in mind : the longer the delay, the greater the danger. . .

4°. There is one grace so great that not even the just can merit it ; and that is the grace of final perseverance. Still it is consistent, or in harmony with God's goodness—*congruous*, to use the expression of theologians—that He will grant it as a result of supplication and a well spent life. . .

5°. Finally, you may ask, can we merit for others ? Not in the strict sense—that one can do only for oneself. But what a just man can strictly merit for himself, the same he can *congruously* merit for others—which means that God, consistently with His mercy and goodness, will grant his prayer. And this is particularly true when there is question of obtaining the conversion of a sinner. This is the teaching of S. Thomas, and theologians generally. S. James says ; *Pray for one another, that you may be saved.* v. 16. Thus S. Monica is supposed to have merited the conversion of her son Augustine.

III. What are the conditions for meriting ?

1°. The reward is great ; the labour is small ; the conditions are light : *That which at present is momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory.* 2 Cor. iv. 17.

2°. By what works can we merit ?—By all : (1) By any good work done for the service of God, for instance, an alms however small, even a cup of cold water, by prayer, by patience. . . (2) By our ordinary every day duties, provided they are done with a good intention for the glory of God. (3) Even by works that are called indifferent, if they too be done with a good intention, for the Apostle says : *Whether you eat or drink, or whatever else you do, do all to the glory of God.* 1 Cor. x. 31.

3°. But is there any condition required that these works may merit eternal life ? Yes, one great and essential con-

dition—*that they be done in the state of sanctifying grace*. A man in the state of grace can by his touch as it were turn everything into gold. . .

4°. What if one is not in the state of grace? . . One's works of course cannot merit; neither are they worthless. They help to please God, and thus impetrate or entreat conversion. . .

5°. With a view to understanding this better, we should distinguish four classes of works, namely: death-bearing works (sin),—*mortified* works (works once meritorious, but merit now lost),—dead works (those done in sin),—and living works.

6°. Should there not be an upright intention?—Yes indeed, by a good intention all should be directed towards God—they should be done for God, and in His service. . . It is possible to have a bad intention in doing a work of itself good, for instance, the giving of an alms out of vanity. . . How easy it is to have a good intention!

7°. Can the same work be more or less meritorious? And, secondly, whence comes the degree, or amount, so to speak, of merit?—R. The degree of merit in works varies, and depends on the person and on the work.—In regard to the person or subject, the degree of merit depends on his dignity before God. Thus every work of Christ was of infinite merit, because of His infinite dignity.

If we look to the work, the amount of merit depends first and principally on the charity that dictates it²; secondly, on the kind or worth of the work itself; thirdly, on the extent or greatness, so to speak, of the work; fourthly, on other circumstances, such as difficulties, duration, and so forth.²

Conclusion.—Therefore, by all the works of this brief life, we can merit treasures for eternity. . . Let us then imitate, but in a higher and nobler way, the artist of old who said:

¹ See theology, *De Charitate*.

² See theology, *De Merito*.

I am painting for eternity. . . . Let us labour for eternity, by meriting unceasingly, so that our whole life may become one unbroken golden chain of merit ; so that every single day may be full of the fruit of the vine. Thus will be realized in us the prayer which the Psalmist prayed for his people, when he asked that : *Full days shall be found in them.* Ps. lxxii. 10. . . Thus too shall our path be the path of the just, which as *a shining light goeth forwards and increaseth even to perfect day.* Prov. iv. 18.

OTHER FORMS.

The possibility and necessity of meriting can be thus set forth : I. What should we merit ?—Salvation : heavenly glory is the reward, which reward implies merit ; but merit presupposes labour. *Then will he render to every man according to his works.* Matth. xvi. 27. . . It is the crown of victory : *He . . . is not crowned, except he strive lawfully.* 2 Tim. ii. 5. —II. What can we merit ?—III. How can we merit most copiously ?

All men merit :—I. Some, earthly things ;—II. some, hell ; —III. some, paradise.

I. Nothing is easier than meriting,—II. Nothing more precious.—III. Nothing more neglected.

I. We can merit by all kinds of works and ways.—II. By these same we ought to merit.—III. Why then merit so little?

Merit can be of various grades and worth.—I. One kind is as copper.—II. Another as silver.—III. A third as gold. *I counsel thee to buy of me gold fire-tried, that thou mayest be made rich; and mayest be clothed in white garments.* Apoc. iii. 18.

PRAYER.

FIRST DISCOURSE.

GENERAL VIEW.

We ought always to pray, and not to faint.—Luke,
xviii. 1.

PRAYER¹ is so essential to religion that it is in a manner a compendium of all spirituality. The instinct for prayer is imprinted on the heart of man; so much so that even amongst pagan peoples there is not found a religion which does not insist on prayer.

The Christian religion especially is a religion of prayer. It commends nothing more earnestly than the exercise of prayer. Its Founder, Jesus Christ, was ever communing with His Father; whilst the Prophets, Apostles, and all the Saints were men of prayer.

Accordingly, he who has the spirit of prayer is truly religious, is truly a Christian, and will attain the promised rewards: so that it has come to be recognised that the spirit of prayer is a sign of predestination.

That we may more and more acquire this spirit, we shall consider:

I. The excellence of Prayer.

II. The efficacy of Prayer.

III. The necessity of Prayer.

IV. The practice of it.

¹ See theology, *De Relig.*

I. The excellence of Prayer.

1°. He who understands this will not ask why he should pray ; but rather will exclaim : whence is it given to me that I can pray ?

2°. And well may he so exclaim, for prayer is a communion with God Himself. . .

3°. Like incense it ascends and floats before the throne of God, and has incense as its symbol : *Another angel came, and stood before the altar, having a golden censor ; and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer of the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which is before the throne of God.* Apoc. viii. 3.

4°. It is a connection or communication with heaven, having as another image the ladder of Jacob : *Our conversation is in heaven.* Phil. iii. 20.

5°. It is the language of the children of God. . .

6°. It is a certain sign of salvation.¹—But on the other hand, to quote the words of S. Bonaventure : *When I see a man not loving the exercise of prayer, not imbued with a fervent and vehement desire for it, and not caring to avail of the divine privilege of communion with God, I conclude that he is moulded of coarse and common clay—a man who, spiritually, is already dead.*

II. The efficacy of Prayer.

1°. It enriches with all good things, and delivers from all evils. . . It obtains for us the things that are eternal, and the temporal in so far as they are to our advantage. . . It delivers from evils, past, present, and to come ; as well as from what afflicts us externally and internally, whether in body or in soul.

2°. It is the key of heaven. . . Aug. serm. 229.

3°. It is a golden chain let down from heaven to earth, by which graces are drawn from above, and souls are drawn from below.

¹ See S. Ligouri, *Reflexiones sur les souffrances de J.-C.*

[A well known poet has said :

“ For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves, and those who call them friend !
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God ”].

4°. It is an arrow that speeds through the heavens, and falls at the feet of God.

5°. It is *the arrow of the Lord's deliverance* (4 Kings, xiii. 17),—the armour of the strong,—the city of refuge. . .

6°. It is more powerful than armies in battle array. . . It is more powerful than the devil. Yes even it can conquer God Himself and make Him drop from His hands the thunderbolts of His justice. Of this we have a striking example in Exodus : *And the Lord said to Moses : Let me alone that my wrath may be kindled against them, and that I may destroy them. . . But Moses besought the Lord his God. . . And the Lord was appeased from doing the evil which he had spoken against his people.* Exod. xxxii. 10 and following.

7°. The earth is fertile ; but its fertility cannot be compared with the fruits of prayer. And this can be confirmed by testimony and example. . .

III. Necessity of Prayer.

1°. In the first place the misery with which we are clothed proves it—of ourselves we *are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.*

2°. Then there is the will of God, which has decreed that prayer is necessary, by necessity of *precept* and *means*.—The necessity of precept is evident from many texts of Scripture, by which we are commanded to pray : *Ask and it shall be given you.* Matth. vii. 7.—*We ought always to pray, and not to faint.* Luke, xviii. 1.—The necessity of *means* is proved from the fact, on the one hand, that we need daily helps

for our salvation, and, on the other, that God has decreed not to give them except to those who ask and pray. And God has so decreed because this is the only way of bringing home to us that our salvation and all good things come from Him; and because it is our only way of confessing our total dependence on Him, and of giving Him unceasing thanks. . .

3°. A father wishes that his children should ask him for good things: so too does God. . .

4°. As the earth, although most fertile, requires cultivation and irrigation, so the soul, no matter how otherwise well disposed, needs prayer. . .

5°. Prayer is the light of the soul,—its food,—and its respiration.

6°. Prayer is the armour of God's soldier in the day of battle. . .

7°. Wherefore, he who prays shall want nothing, and shall rise superior to his enemies; but he who does not pray shall lack everything, and shall be the sport and mockery of his enemies.

IV. Practice of Prayer.

1°. Prayer is easy. The slightest elevation of the soul to God—that is prayer. . . Every beggar, every infant however weak, knows how to ask, and to make known what he desires: in like manner every one can pray, provided he realises his want.

2°. The characteristics or qualities of good prayer are: humility, confidence, and perseverance; and a necessary condition is recollection of the divine presence, *that one should by vivid faith prostrate oneself at the feet of the Lord, as a son at the feet of his father.*

3°. What is necessary before, during, and after prayer? Before prayer: preparation; during prayer: piety; after prayer: harmony of life with the things sought for. . .

4°. Is prayer always heard? Yes, infallibly, if the conditions are fulfilled. . . What are these conditions? ¹

¹ See theology.

5°. There are various classes of Christians in respect to prayer :—(1) There are those who do not pray ; (2) those who pray badly ; (3) those who pray well.

6°. Why are so many not heard ? . . Frequently they ask for temporal things, without caring to detest their sins, and seek first the friendship of God. . .

7°. The different kinds of prayer are vocal, mental, ejaculatory. . .

8°. How are we to interpret the continuous prayer spoken of by Christ ? (Luke, xviii. 1).

9°. It will be most helpful to explain in detail to the people the Lord's prayer, and other forms of prayer.

10°. How comes it that many cannot recite the Lord's prayer without insincerity ? . .

11°. What are the impediments to prayer ? How can they be removed ? . .

12°. Our prayer should be addressed not only to God and Christ Jesus, but also to the Blessed Virgin Mary, to the Angels and Saints. . .

PRAYER.

SECOND DISCOURSE.

Ask and you shall receive.—John, xvi. 24.

I. What are the motives for Prayer?

II. What are its objects?

III. What are the conditions of Prayer?

I. What are the motives for Prayer?

By motives are here meant those considerations which should induce us to pray. . . They are principally three: the necessity of prayer, the efficacy of prayer, the consolation or sweetness of prayer.

1°. *The necessity of prayer.* (1) The natural law—which is mirrored in the light of reason—imposes an obligation on all, to adore God, to praise Him, to give Him thanks, and to petition pardon from Him.

(2) In addition there is a positive divine precept which further enforces the dictates of the natural law: *We ought always to pray, and not to faint.* Luke, xviii. 1.

(3) We are so miserably weak that we cannot without the grace of God conquer grave temptations and save our soul. And the grace of God is not usually given except to those who ask for it.

(4) Experience teaches that we ourselves, those who are dear to us, and the community at large, need and desire many things, both spiritual and temporal; and these will be granted only by petitioning God. . .

2°. *The efficacy of prayer.* (1) So great is the fruit of prayer that, even if we were less miserable than we are, we should still unceasingly have recourse to it. . . If a king promised that he would grant his subjects everything they asked—would not this be an inducement to offer petitions without number? . .

(2) But this promise God has made to all who pray—a promise made a hundred times over in Sacred Scripture, and confirmed by oath: *Amen, amen I say to you.* . . John, xiv. 12. . . And it extends to everything which, consistently as Christians, we can desire: *You shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you.* John, xv. 7. . . And the invitation is to all without exception, whether they be great or humble: *The ears of a prince,* says S. Chrysostom, *are open only to a few; those of God, to all who wish.* . . Nor are sinners, even the very worst, excluded: as is evident from the example of the publican who prayed in the vestibule of the temple. . . Wherefore the Apostle says of God that He is *rich unto all that call upon him.* Rom. x. 12.

God has pledged His word and bound Himself to refuse nothing to prayer. By prayer He is in a manner constrained, even though otherwise unwilling, to grant our request. S. John Climacus says that *prayer offers violence to God.* And S. Scripture contains many examples that bear out this statement. In the book of Jeremias we read that God said: *Do not pray for this people, nor take to thee praise and supplication for them, and do not withstand me.* . . Jeremias, vii. 16. . . And how often did Moses by prayer restrain the avenging arm of God in His anger! . . *And he said that he would destroy them; had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach.* Ps. cv. 23. . . *And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Go, get thee down, thy people . . hath sinned. . . Let me alone, that my wrath may be kindled against them, and that I may destroy them, and I will make of thee a great nation. But Moses besought the Lord his God, saying: Why, O Lord, is thy indignation kindled against thy people. . . Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants. . . And the Lord was appeased from doing the evil which he had spoken against*

his people. Exod. xxxii. 7 and following.—*Thy wrath did not long continue: for a blameless man made haste to pray for the people, bringing forth the shield of his ministry, prayer, and by incense making supplication, withstood the wrath, and put an end to the calamity.* Wisdom, xviii. 20, 21.—*Josue, relying on the strength of prayer, said: Move not, O sun, toward Gabaon, nor thou, O moon, toward the valley of Ajalon. And the sun and the moon stood still. . . There was not before or after so long a day, the Lord obeying the voice of a man.* Josue, x. 12-14.

Here, however, it should be noted that God, when He does not grant at once what we ask, by no means goes back of His word. Perhaps our prayer is not clothed with the proper conditions; or the object we pray for is not best for us; or it may be that it would be better for us if it were granted later. . . Delay only kindles our desire, makes us think more of God's gifts, and so disposes us to pray more earnestly.

3°. *The consolation or sweetness of prayer.* Experience teaches that in prayer afflicted souls find comfort; fervent souls most pure delight; all Christian souls a calming of passions, the flavour of virtue, and the odour of innocence. . .

II. What are the objects of Prayer?

In other words, for what is it lawful to pray?

1°. In general, for whatever is necessary or useful for our soul. . .

2°. Freedom from evils, even temporal evils, since such is expedient for our salvation. . .

3°. Whatever is necessary for the support of the body,—or for the social position in which divine Providence has placed us.

III. What are the conditions of Prayer?

1°. Reverence, external and internal, for the divine majesty. . . Reverence includes attention, by which is meant that the mind should be fixed on what we say.

[We might quote in this connection what a well-known poet has said :

“My words fly up, my thoughts remain below :

Words without thoughts never to heaven go.”]

2°. Humility, founded on a sense of our own misery, unworthiness and poverty before God. . .

3°. Confidence, founded on a lively faith in the divine mercy and divine promises. . .

4°. An earnest and vehement desire of moving God by our appeal. . .

5°. Perseverance. . .

Conclusion. Let us then earnestly pray at the feet of the Lord, our God and Father ; and we shall receive all good things from His hand. If the vapour of our breath go up a shower of God's graces will come down : *Vespertina oratio ascendat ad te Domine ; et descendat super nos misericordia sua.* . . Blessed is the man who gives time and care to prayer : *He shall be like a tree which is planted near the running waters.* Ps. i. 3.

THE SACRAMENTS.

You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains. Isai. xii. 3.

THE principle or beginning of our supernatural life and eternal salvation is grace, which Christ so copiously merited for us by His blood; for *where sin abounded, grace did more abound.* Rom. v. 20.—How shall we acquire this most precious gift? From what fountain shall we draw? By what canals shall we lead it to our soul?—There are two canals which God has marked out and opened—prayer and the sacraments. We have already dealt with one; we shall now consider the other.

The entire doctrine of the Sacraments can be reduced to three heads: the notion or meaning of the Sacraments, their cause, and the various fruits that we can gather therefrom. All three are contained under the following questions, which we shall discuss:

I. What are the Sacraments, and how many are they?

II. By whose hand have they been given?

III. What do they produce, and how do they operate?

I. What are the Sacraments, and how many are they?

1°. The Sacraments are channels of grace given by Christ to the Church. . . They are in a manner rivers flowing from the open side of the Saviour: *You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains.* Isai. xii. 3.—From these same rivers, the Saints, who lived in the Church and now reign with Christ, drew waters of sanctity. . .

2°. In point of name, a sacrament signifies (1) a holy thing ; (2) a mystery, or thing holy but occult ; (3) a sign, or holy symbol, conducive to man's sanctification.

3°. A sacrament is defined as : (1) *a visible sign of invisible grace, instituted for our sanctification ;* (2) *a practical sign of grace instituted by Christ ;* (3) *a sensible sign, permanently instituted by Christ, which has the power of signifying and producing holiness.*¹

4°. A distinction must be made between sacraments and *sacramentals*, especially in this, that the latter were not instituted by Christ, and have not the same efficacy. . .

5°. In what consists the external or sensible sign in the sacraments ?—In the union of what are called *matter* and *form* : matter is the thing, form the words. . .

6°. Why did God attach grace to external signs ? He could have granted grace otherwise ; but He has granted it in this way that (1) man, a corporeal being, should, according to his nature, receive invisible gifts through visible means ; (2) that the sacraments may serve as a bond by which the members of a visible Church should be bound together, and distinguished from others ; (3) that in the sacraments the Church may have so many proofs and testimonies to her faith ; (4) and that they may be so many symbols of Christ Jesus, who united His Divinity, which could not be seen, to His humanity, which could be seen.²

7°. How many sacraments are there ?—Seven : Baptism, Confirmation, etc.—They are variously divided : (1) sacraments of the living and of the dead ; (2) sacraments that imprint a character or mark, and accordingly that can not be repeated, and sacraments that do not imprint a character, and can be repeated ; (3) one sacrament is necessary by necessity of means, the others by necessity of precept ; and again, some may or may not be received, according to one's wish, and are accordingly named free sacraments, they are for the community as well as for the individual, such as Holy

¹ Some things are here omitted, as they are too technical for a sermon.—Translator.

² See theology.

Orders and Matrimony ; (4) finally, there is the distinction of valid and fruitful, and invalid and unfruitful—the latter because of indisposition on the part of the recipient.

8°. The seven sacraments are intended to embrace all the necessities of the spiritual life, and as such are akin to the needs of one's natural life. In the latter, for instance, one is *born, grows strong, is fed and nourished, is healed* when wounded, and *regains strength*. To these, it will be seen, correspond in the spiritual order, Baptism, Confirmation, The Eucharist, Penance, and Extreme Unction. In addition, the Church and society have to be *propagated* and *ruled* : hence Holy Orders and Matrimony.

9°. The seven sacraments might be regarded as the seven pillars which uncreated and incarnate Wisdom, Jesus Christ, has hewn and placed in His house—the Church (See Prov. ix. 1). . . Likewise they might be compared to the seven lights and seven funnels that Zachary saw on top of the golden candlestick. Zach. iv. 2.

10°. The sacraments are not all of the same dignity : supereminent amongst them is the most august sacrament of the Eucharist, round which as a centre all the others radiate. . .

11°. In fine the sacraments are the foundation of all the ceremonies and of all the external worship that characterise the Church. . .

II. By whose hand are the sacraments given.

1°. By the hand of Christ, and the hand of the Church : from Christ, as author, institutor and first minister, who merited them by His blood, and instituted them by His power ; from the Church, who holds them as a sacred deposit, and dispenses them.

2°. Who is the minister of the sacraments ? There are two ministers : one visible, man ; the other invisible, secretly operating in the person of man, namely, Jesus Christ. Christ is the principal, man the secondary minister. . . *He* (Christ) *it is that baptizeth in the Holy Ghost*. John, i. 33.

S. Augustine, commenting on these words, says: Should Peter baptize, He (Christ) it is who baptizes; should Paul baptize, He it is who baptizes; should Judas baptize, He it is who baptizes. Tract. 6 on John.

3°. Whom has Christ appointed as ministers of His sacraments?—Bishops, priests; and for Baptism in case of necessity, any human being can be minister.

4°. Does every legitimate minister of the sacraments produce the same effect?—Precisely the same, even though one should be holier than another. For a sacrament is a key to grace—a vase of grace—a seed of grace—a divine seal—the effect of which does not depend on the purity of the hand that operates.

III. What do they produce, and how do they operate?

1°. All give grace. In addition, three, and three only, imprint a character or mark.

2°. This character is an indelible mark imprinted on the soul by Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders.

3°. Viewed in general, this character is a mark of great distinction, because (1) it gives the soul a spiritual beauty and ornament; (2) it makes man like to Christ; (3) because it distinguishes him in the eyes of God and His angels from all others; (4) because it gives him special rights and power. . .

4°. Viewed in particular, the character of Baptism stamps one as belonging to the family of Christ; that of Confirmation as belonging to the army of Christ; that of Orders as belonging to His priesthood.

5°. The grace of a sacrament is twofold: the one sanctifying grace, the other sacramental grace. . . By the latter is meant a grace special to each sacrament.

6°. There are two sacraments which produce their effect, the one by way of medicine, namely, Penance, the other by way of food, namely, the Blessed Eucharist: accordingly these sacraments should be frequently received.

7°. How do the sacraments produce their effect?—*Ex opere operato*, that is, certainly and infallibly, by the very

fact that they have been applied ; or, in other words, in virtue of the sacramental work or action, and not from the merits of the minister or person receiving : just as fire will burn equally straw or wood, provided it is applied ; or as a seal will produce its impression on wax. . .

8°. Can the effect be hindered ? Yes, on the part of the recipient : as for instance the effect of fire is impeded in wood if the wood be wet or green ; and as the pouring of liquor into a vessel becomes impossible if the vessel be covered, or be full of something else. . . The impediment in case of the sacraments is usually a bad disposition.

9°. What are the dispositions that are required for the fruitful reception of the sacraments ?—We must distinguish between sacraments of the living and sacraments of the dead.

10°. What happens if a person should receive the sacrament of Confirmation or Orders in a state of sin ?—He receives indeed the character or mark, but not grace. . . He can, however, receive grace later through the reviviscence of the sacrament. . .

11°. A sacrament can be received in different ways, validly or invalidly, with fruit or sacrilegiously. . . To receive it sacrilegiously is a great sin, an awful profanation—it is a trampling the blood of Christ under foot, and turning medicine into poison. . .

12°. It is important to remember that, although the sacraments act infallibly in case of those who do not place an impediment, still each one receives grace according to the measure of his preparation and disposition. . .

Conclusion.—Let us therefore with vivid faith meditate on, reverence, and receive the sacraments ; doing so, we shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains. *Isaias, xii. 3.*

SPECIAL HEADINGS.

Meaning. I. What is a sacrament?—II. What are the ceremonies of the sacraments?—III. What are sacramentals.

Effects. I. What is sacramental grace?—II. What is the character or mark?

The reception. I. Do all receive the same grace in the sacraments.—II. Who receive more abundant graces?

A threefold reception can be distinguished: I. invalid and sacrilegious;—II. valid;—III. fruitful.

Impediment. I. How are the sacraments impeded?—II. How are the impediments removed?

The excellence of the sacraments. I. Are the sacraments a great gift of God?—II. What does this gift demand of us?

SANCTIFYING THE LORD'S DAY.

Remember that you keep holy the sabbath day.

—Exod. xx. 8.

THERE is no other precept of the decalogue which the Lord has so strongly commanded as the sanctification of the Sabbath. The reason is, because the observance of this precept does in a manner embrace all the others ; but this neglected, the others will be neglected too.

This too is the only precept that the Lord has enforced by the strong word, *Remember*. Probably because—in addition to its gravity—so many things tend to make one forget it. . . .

Wherefore let us most diligently bear this precept in mind, and see to fulfilling it. With a view to doing so, we shall reflect on the following considerations :

I. Why should the Lord's Day be sanctified ?

II. How can we properly do so ?

I. Why ?

1°. Because there is an obligation, founded on (1) the natural law ; (2) on a positive primeval precept ; (3) on the Mosaic law ; (4) and on Ecclesiastical or Christian law. . . .

2°. There is a Christian obligation. (1) *I am not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it.* Matth. v. 17. . . (2) The Apostles changed the sabbath to Sunday, because Christ Himself sanctified this day by many mysteries, principally by the Resurrection, and the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles. . . (3) The Apostles named it the Lord's Day : *I John . . . was in the spirit on the Lord's day.* Apoc. i. 10.

It was also called by many other names, for example, *the holy day, the day of rest, of light, of bread*. It is called *holy*, and so it is :—(a) on the part of God, by reason of the graces and blessings which He specially grants on that day ; (b) on the part of the faithful, by reason of the piety and works of mercy in which they ought to engage on Sunday.

3°. They who observe this precept are copiously rewarded by both spiritual and temporal blessings.

4°. They who violate it are punished : *Let that man die*. . . Numb. xv. 35. They commit a grave sin, a sin of disobedience to God and the Church,—a sin of scandal—a certain kind of sacrilege. . . They shall be punished, perhaps in temporal things, certainly in things spiritual. . . For very grave consequences flow from the neglect of this precept. Sunday labour does no good, and it increases misery. . .

5°. Profanation of the Sunday spells ruin to (1) religion, (2) society, (3) the family, (4) and human dignity. . .

6°. And vain are the excuses that are usually alleged namely :—(1) temporal gain, (2) recreation, (3) business, (4) rest. . . These, I repeat, are vain excuses. And even if they had a solid foundation in fact, would that be sufficient to justify one in neglecting a higher and better good ? *For what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul ?* Matth. xvi. 26.

7°. *It is a fitting thing*—even if there were no strict obligation—to observe the sabbath ; for after six days of labour it is proper for a man to give one (1) to His God, and (2) the salvation of his soul. . . Our days and hours are all from God, and, accordingly, the least one should do, especially a Christian, is to give Him one day out of seven. . . Six days for the affairs of time ; one for the affairs of eternity ! *Let us so regulate things temporal, that we miss not the eternal.* (Prayer for third Sunday after Pentecost).

8°. It is fitting too that that day should be sanctified, in which so many mysteries were accomplished—that day which is the image of the one wide sabbath of eternity. . . *There remaineth therefore a day of rest for the people of God.* Hebr. iv. 9.

9°. But what is to be said of those who, on that day of holiness, honour, not God, but the devil? . . .

10°. It is a pleasing thing to see on the Lord's day the people of God assembled in church with His angels at the feet of their heavenly Father. . . . Of the house of God on that day we can say, in the words of Jacob: *Indeed the Lord is in this place. . . . This is no other but the house of God, and the gate of heaven.* Gen. xxviii. 16, 17.

11°. It is a sweet and pleasing thing for a Christian man, with pure heart, and peaceful conscience, to devote with his family, the Sunday to God; it is the prelude and foretaste of eternal rest. . . .

II. How is the Sunday to be properly sanctified?

1°. By doing what God and the Church wishes us to do. (1) Sacred Scripture indicates a threefold end we should have in view in sanctifying that day: (a) that God's people may honour their God, as the author of time, and the creator of the world; (b) that they may manifest their gratitude; (c) that they may be distinguished from the gentiles or pagans. . . .

(2) The Church wishes that her faithful should consecrate the Sunday to God, and the salvation of their soul: (a) to God, by adoration, thanksgiving, and prayer for help. . . . (b) to their soul, by entering into themselves, by repairing the defects of the week, and by multiplying good works. . . .

2°. The chief obligation is to abstain from servile works and to hear Mass.

3°. How often the Lord's day becomes the devil's day, and the sewer of the whole week! *Thus saith the Lord of hosts: . . . I will scatter upon your face the dung of your solemnities.* Malach. ii. 3.

4°. Various are the ways in which Christians spend the Sunday. (1) Some in ease, thinking it enough if they abstain from work; (2) some make it chiefly consist in wearing their best clothes, and resting; (3) some in feasting or the

immoderate enjoyment of recreation ; (4) and some spend it holily. . .

5°. It is the wish of the Church that, in addition to abstaining from work and hearing Mass, the faithful should attend pious exercises, especially listening to the word of God. . .

6°. That they frequent the sacraments. . .

7°. That they engage in pious reading. . .

8°. That they abstain from evil enjoyments, by which the devil strives for this day against the Lord. . .

9°. Not that the Church objects to recreation ; on the contrary, she regards proper and moderate recreation as beneficial. . .

Peroration. Behold he who fears the Lord shall be blessed. He shall be blessed in the temporal as well as in the spiritual order ; he shall enter into the peace, the rest, the happiness of the eternal Sabbath in the Kingdom of the Lord. Let us hasten therefore to enter into that rest. Hebr. iv. 11.

THE BLESSED EUCHARIST.

Behold the tabernacle of God with men, and he will dwell with them.—Apoc. xxi. 3.

Where is that blessed tabernacle in which God dwells with men? In heaven? Yes truly; but on earth also. . . . With, however, this difference; in heaven the Divine Majesty is revealed face to face; but on earth it remains hidden beneath a veil—the veil of the Blessed Eucharist in the tabernacle of our altars. Well may we exclaim in the words of Deuteronomy (iv. 7): *Neither is there any other nation so great, that hath gods so nigh to them.* For in this most holy Sacrament we possess Christ Himself, really, truly and substantially present.

But alas! for many men, how little this great privilege means, either because they do not understand, or, understanding, pay no heed!

Let us, brethren, strive not to be numbered amongst such persons; let us strive to realize this the great central doctrine of our faith and life-blood of our religion. With a view to doing so, we shall consider:

I. What is the Blessed Eucharist?

II. What should be our devotion to it?

I. What is the Blessed Eucharist?

What is it in itself? What in regard to the Church? We shall consider each point separately.

First Point. *What is the Blessed Eucharist in itself?*

1°. It is that adorable sacrament which was instituted by Christ, in which He Himself is present, under the appearance of bread and wine.

2°. Prompted by love—*My delights were to be with the children of men*, Prov. viii. 31—it was instituted at the last Supper. But, with supreme wisdom, and benign consideration for man's limitation to grasp suddenly so stupendous a mystery, Christ first *prefigured* it at the marriage feast in Cana, and by the multiplication of the loaves; next *announced* and *promised* it at Capharnaum (John, vi.) ; and finally, some twelve months later, *instituted* it, as the pledge of His love, on the eve of His Passion. . .

3°. And He did so that it might be the living memorial of His Passion, the sacrifice of the New Law, the food of the children of God; that it might be a monument to His love, the pledge of future glory, the symbol of His mystic body the Church, and a perpetual source of consolation to us; in brief, Christ wished to be our victim, our companion, and our food.

4°. It is a sacrament great beyond all other sacraments—as the sun dominates the stars.

5°. It is the compendium of God's wonders in the order of grace . . . as man is the compendium of His works in the order of nature. . . In the B. Eucharist is the Incarnation of the Son of God . . . His life . . . His examples and miracles . . . His death and resurrection . . . and the elevation of human nature.

6°. It is known under many names, according to the aspect on which attention is focussed, thus: Mystery, *the* Sacrament, Sacrament of love, Sacrament of humility, the wonderful Sacrament, the venerable Sacrament, the most holy Sacrament, the Sacrament of the altar, and the Blessed Eucharist.

7°. And it was prefigured by many figures: the manna in the desert . . . the water changed into wine . . . the multiplication of the loaves . . . the transfiguration of Christ (the transfiguration here being, not, as on Thabor, for manifesting, but for concealing, His glory) . . . the sun standing still at the voice of Josue (God obeying man) . . . Moses with covered face speaking to the Israelites . . . the ark of the covenant erected in the tabernacle

of the Old Law . . the purple veil that hung before the holy of holies . . the swaddling clothes in which the Divine Infant Emmanuel was wrapt in Bethlehem. . .

Second Point. *Considered in regard to the Church.*

Whether the Church be taken collectively as embracing its members in a body, or distributively as referring to each singly, the Eucharist is :

1°. The invisible Head of the Church, as the Roman Pontiff is the visible head. . .

2°. It is the visible centre of the whole Catholic system ; for all of worship that the Church offers to God revolves around the altar. . .

3°. It is the centre of union : at and through the Eucharistic table, all the children of the Church meet their Father, and one another. . . (Here the preacher might refer to the effect of the Eucharistic Congress at the present day).

4°. It is the golden ring that binds the Church militant with the Church triumphant, the Church visible with the Church invisible. . .

5°. It is Christ the bridegroom, conquered and bound by love, abiding with the Church the bride. . .

6°. It is the hidden treasure, but at the same time open, from which we may draw . . the centre of light, the source of strength, the spring of consolation. . .

7°. It is the fountain of living water, the fountain of life, the fountain in the centre of paradise. . .¹

8°. It is the sun in the highest heavens, always shining, and coming down to earth, not in rays only, but in very substance, and illuminating and vivifying the whole world. . .

9°. It is the pillar of fire and cloud, going before and leading the Church in its journey on earth. (Exod. xiii. 21, 22).—And it is a pillar and fire and cloud in another

¹ See Esther x. 6 ; Gen. ii. 10 ; Cant. iv. 15.

sense : a pillar of support and stability ; a fire of love and illumination ; a cloud of protection and fruitfulness. . .

10°. It is the heart of the Church, which sends pulsating through its body the life-giving blood of charity, and all the virtues that adorn it. . .

11°. It is the principle of the Church's activity. . .

12°. It is the tree of life in the centre of paradise, giving life, not only to the soul through grace, but to the body also, inasmuch as it is the seed of a future resurrection to glory. . .

13°. It is the food and the viaticum of the soul on its journey. . .

14°. Jesus Christ in the Eucharist is the companion, nay the friend, of man the sojourner, as He was to the disciples on their way to Emmaus. Luke, xxiv. 16.

15°. It is the book of life, written within and without,—sealed, but opened by the Lamb that was slain (Isai. xxix. 11 ; Apoc. v. 1.), in which is contained the title of our nobility, the secret of all riches, the love of all knowledge, and the key to all sanctity. . .

II. What should be our devotion to the Blessed Eucharist ?

1°. First, adoration. For, as the Council of Trent puts it, " We believe that there is present the same God whom the eternal Father, on introducing to earth, said : Let all the angels adore him ; whom the Magi falling down adored." Trent. sess. 13, ch. 5.

2°. Reverence : we should imitate the example of the angels, who, though not visible, surround the altar in adoration of their Lord. . .

3°. Visitation : it is proper that our delight should consist in being with Him whose delight is to be with the children of men. Prov. viii. 31.

4°. Consolation : yes, He looks for it, because He must feel pained at the forgetfulness, indifference, coldness and ingratitude of so many of His own : *His own received him not. . . There hath stood one in the midst of you whom you know not.* John, i. 11, 26.

5°. Reparation : for He is unhonoured. . . By whom ?
 . . How ? . .

6°. Oblation : by being present at the sacrifice of the Mass.¹ . .

7°. By receiving Him in Holy Communion. . .

8°. By honouring Him : in decorating the altar on which He reposes ; by attending at solemnities and processions in His honour—*Lauda Sion Salvatorem*. . .

9°. By faith,—by hope and confidence,—by love in return for His immense love. . .

10°. By imitating His humility, His charity, His interior life, and the other virtues which are taught us by His hidden life in the Eucharist. . .

11°. By propagating devotion to Him, in joining a society of perpetual adoration, by good example, and by words of exhortation to others. . .

Peroration. Let us recognise therefore where lies our treasure ; where dwells our friend, where our Lord abideth. . . *Let us go therefore with confidence to the throne of grace.*
 Hebr. iv. 16.

*Jesum omnes agnoscite,
 Amorem ejus pascite,
 Jesum ardenter quaerite,
 Quaerendo inardescite.*

¹ Note Sermon on *Sacrifice of the Mass*, and on *Holy Communion*.

SPECIAL HEADINGS.

Honouring the Blessed Eucharist :—I. How should Christ be honoured in the B. Sacrament? By faith, confidence, and love.—II. When?

I. What do we possess in the B. Eucharist?—II. Why, notwithstanding such a treasure, are so many poor, and miserable?

Christ in the Eucharist is,—I. our friend,—II. our father,—III. our doctor.

I. What is due to Christ in the B. Eucharist?—II. What return is made to Him?—III. What return will I make?

Christ in the B. Eucharist,—I. consoles us in every tribulation;—II. He looks in return for consolation from us His friends.

I. What does He suffer in the B. Eucharist?—II. By whom is the suffering inflicted?—III. How should He be consoled?

I. What does He offer to men?—II. What response do men make? . . .

THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.

From the rising of the sun even to the going down, my name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation.—Malach. i. 11.

EVERY religion has its sacrifice—for the idea of sacrifice is imprinted on the heart of man. What is the sacrifice of the Christian religion? It is the most holy sacrifice of the Mass: that clean oblation, alone worthy of the altars of God . . . by which due glory is given God by the human race, by which God is propitiated unto the giving of His gifts.

The Mass is justly regarded as the primary act of Christian worship: for that every temple in Christendom has been built; for that the faithful assemble at least on Sunday and holyday; and their assembling is the chief distinctive mark of the religion which they profess. . . .

We shall therefore treat to-day of this primary religious act; and with a view to knowing and estimating it properly—with the consequent result of piety and fruit—we shall consider:

I. What is the Sacrifice of the Mass?

II. What are its fruits?

III. What should be our participation?

I. What is the Sacrifice of the Mass?

To answer this question fully we must consider the Mass in the abstract, that is in its essence, as it is in itself; and in the concrete, that is the Mass as it is really offered.

First Point. *What is the Mass as viewed in the abstract?* . . .

It is a true sacrifice, a sacrifice the highest, whether viewed in itself, or in regard to the sacrifices of the Old Law.

1°. It is a true sacrifice. . . Here we may ask what is a sacrifice? It is the primary act of religion, by which man pays to the Creator the homage that is due to Him. Sacrifice existed from the foundation of the world, as is clear from the sacrifices of Abel, Noe, Abraham, Melchisedech. . . Sacrifice existed amongst the gentiles . . . and it was specially observed by the Israelites. . .

2°. Prefigured and foretold in the Old Law and instituted by Christ at the last Supper, the Mass is a true sacrifice, and as such has all the requisites for the same, namely, a priest, an altar, a victim, and destruction.

3°. It is a sacrifice the most excellent, whether viewed in itself, or in comparison with the sacrifices of the Old Law. The sacrifices of the Old Law, though holy and pleasing to God, were only so many types and figures of which the Mass is the fulfilment. And in itself it is unsurpassable in perfection : (a) because it is the same as the sacrifice of Calvary, "In this divine sacrifice, says the Council of Trent (Sess. 22, ch. 2), which is gone through in the Mass, that same Christ is contained, and offered in an unbloody manner, who on the altar of the cross once offered himself in a bloody manner. . . There is one and the same host, the same now offering himself by the ministry of the priest, who then offered himself on the cross, the manner of offering only being different." It is likewise unsurpassable in perfection (b) because it is the same as the sacrifice of the last Supper, in which the Priest, according to the order of Melchisedech, offered His body and blood under the appearance of bread and wine to God the Father, and commissioned His Apostles and their successors in the priesthood to do the same : *Do this in commemoration of me.* . . . Wherefore the sacrifice of the Mass does not differ, except in certain circumstances, from the sacrifice of the last Supper. . .

4°. It is likewise a sacrifice most excellent and most high, by reason of its universality and perpetuity. . . Also by reason of its fruit—of which we shall speak later.

Second Point. *What is the Mass viewed in the concrete, as it is really offered?*

[Under this head the preacher can explain the different parts of the Mass, and the meaning of the ceremonies. . . We need not here go into detail, as he will find ample information on the subject in any recognised book on ceremonies].

II. What are the fruits of the Mass?

1°. The fruit is derived from the dignity of this sacrifice, which is the same as the sacrifice of Calvary. . .

2°. The effect of the Mass is fourfold, according to the fourfold end for which it is offered, namely, worship, thanksgiving, propitiation, and impetration.

3°. The fruit can also be distinguished according as it refers to God, or to us. . . In regard to God, it is adoration and thanksgiving. In regard to us, it is satisfaction and impetration—impetration of grace, and remission of the debt we owe on account of sin. . .

4°. You will ask: shall I obtain all I seek? R. One thing is certain, this is the most efficacious way of seeking; and what is more, you will obtain it, if (1) it be good for your soul, and (2) if you ask perseveringly.

5°. You will further ask: for whom can the fruit be obtained? We must distinguish three distinct apportionings of the fruit. The first is for the person for whom the Mass is offered, whether living or dead; the second for the universal Church; the third for the priest who celebrates, and the faithful who attend—according to the measure of one's devotion. Hence the fruit derived from the Mass may vary for those who assist at it—some receiving little, some much, some in measure full and flowing over. . .

III. What should be our participation ?

1°. How often should we assist ? There is an obligation of course for Sundays and holydays. . . In addition it is most desirable that we should assist as frequently as possible. . . Do not say that time would be lost ; for, by assisting, a blessing will descend on even our temporal affairs. . .

2°. When in particular should we hear Mass, or have it offered ? R. In times of tribulation, or special necessity, in our own case, or that of others ; after the death of parents or friends—in which case it devolves on us as a primary debt of piety. . .

Peroration. How should Mass be heard ?—With reverence, attention, and devotion. And it will help us much to remember the four ends for which Mass is offered—adoration, thanksgiving, petition for pardon, and imploration of help. . . The great fountain of piety in hearing Mass is vivid faith ; and vivid faith will lead us to realize this great mystery, this divine Sacrifice : *From the rising of the sun even to the going down, my name is great amongst the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation : for my name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of hosts.*—Malach. i, 11.

SPECIAL HEADINGS.

At the sacrifice of the Mass, as on Calvary, four classes of persons can be distinguished :—I. the crucifiers and deriders of Christ ;—II. the cold and indifferent spectators ;—III. the penitent, like the converted thief and the centurion ;—IV. the souls already united to the Lord, like the B. V. M. and S. John.

What is the sacrifice of the Mass? Or :—I. What takes place visibly?—II. What invisibly?—III. How should we attend to so great a mystery? . .

I. What takes place at the altar?—II. What at the same time should take place in our heart?

HOLY COMMUNION.

Thou hast prepared a table before me, against them that afflict me.—Ps. xxii.

Wisdom hath built herself a house, she hath hewn her out seven pillars. She hath slain her victims, mingled her wine, and set forth her table. . . . Come, eat my bread.—Prov. ix. 1 and following.

Exordium—one form.

As in a home the table is the centre round which all the children with their parents assemble, so, in the centre of God's great family, holy Church, there is the Eucharistic table. *Thy children as olive plants, round about thy table.*—Ps. cxxvii. 3. Thither they are drawn, all the children of the Church, to the centre of their affections, the fountain of their life, the source of their consolation, the ever-bubbling spring of their happiness.

Exordium—another form.

If a poor man, famished with hunger, were invited to a rich banquet, would he not hasten thither rejoicing? But if, let us suppose, he should prefer to die of starvation, would he not be looked upon as demented? Such is our state in the spiritual order. We are poor and hungry. A table is spread for us, the table of Holy Communion, to which we are all invited. . . . And behold, many stay away, or at least do not come with joy. . . . And why? Principally because they do not understand, or realize, the nature of this banquet. Therefore we shall consider :

I. What is Holy Communion ?

II. What are its fruits ?

III. When and how should we communicate ?

I. What is Holy Communion ?

1°. It is the sacrament of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, given in wonderful manner to the faithful for food.—It is the spiritual food that was promised by Christ (John, vi.) in the synagogue of Capharnaum, and instituted at the last Supper. . .

2°. It is of all mysteries the most divine. . .

3°. It is the compendium of all that Christ has done for the human race. *He hath made a remembrance of his wonderful works, being a merciful and gracious Lord: he hath given food to them that fear him.*—Ps. cx. 4, 5. His birth, His teaching, His healing, the example He gave, His dwelling amongst men, His self-inmolation—all these He has given anew and all at the same time in Holy Communion. . .

4°. It is a divine banquet which the children of God partake at their Father's table: *Thou hast prepared a table before me, against them that afflict me.* Ps. xxii. 5. A banquet surpassing that of Assuerus, of which we read in the book of Esther (ch. I.).

5°. Hence it is called by many names: the bread from heaven,—the bread of angels,—the food of wayfarers,—the bread of the children,—the living and life-giving bread. . .

6°. And, uppermost in the thought and designs of God, it was prefigured by many symbols: the tree of life planted in the centre of paradise; the manna in the desert; the paschal lamb; the bread multiplied by Christ in the desert; the hearth cake of Elias. 3 Kings, xix. 6.

II. What are the fruits of Holy Communion ?

1°. The spiritual effects are analogous to the effects of corporal food, which sustains life, gives strength, pleases, and adds to one's growth. . .

2°. In addition this spiritual food illuminates, heals, and changes to the likeness of Him whose flesh is eaten. In this it was prefigured by the honey, on tasting which the eyes of Jonathan were enlightened. (See 1 Kings, xiv. 27).

3°. It gives light to the mind, to the heart love of things divine, and purity to the senses. . .

4°. To the soul Holy Communion gives an increase of spiritual life, whereby the communicant can say, *I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me.* Gal. ii. 20. This is symbolised by the whole sensible sign of the sacrament, wherein the inanimate substance of bread is changed into the living Body and Soul of Christ Jesus. . .

5°. *It is a fountain open to the house of David* (Zach. xiii. 1), *from which they shall draw waters with joy.* (Isai. xii. 3).

6°. How different is this eating from the sinful eating of our first parents ! They eat and found death ; we eat and find life.

7°. He who eats of this bread is more favoured than the Patriarchs, more privileged than the Magi when they found the new-born Babe, more privileged even than S. Joseph, and, in a manner, participates in the privilege of the Blessed Virgin Mary. . .

8 . Would you like to know how great is this fruit ? Then you must first realize what it is that the Lord should come to us, as friend . . . as father . . . as physician . . . as shepherd . . . and with riches for our poverty. . .

9°. But what of those who approach this table, in what measure do they receive fruit ?—Some receive all (the fervent),—some much (ordinary average Christians),—some little (the tepid),—while other some change the food of life into the poison of death. . . It is a question of our own disposition whether we come and partake fully, or taste sparingly, or go away hungry, or with blood inoculated with the poison of sacrilege.

III. When and how should we communicate ?

1°. The reception of Holy Communion is *necessary*: (1) from the precept of the Lord : *Except you eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not have life in you.* John, vi. 54 . . (2) it is necessary from the fact that Holy

Communion is food ; and food is necessary for life. . .
 (3) it is necessary because of the precept of the Church, which commands the reception of it once a year ; and, by no means content with that, she urges us to receive *frequently*. . .

2°. *Frequently* : yes, for the love of Christ is ever urging us to do so : *Come to me all you who labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you* ; yes, for the reason of our weakness—and the weaker the oftener. . . I am sick, I am poor, I am hungry, I am thirsty—in the Blessed Sacrament I can find my cure and my consolation. There is healing, there is fortitude, there is fire, there is sanctity, there is light, there is leading, there is solace, there is life and resurrection, and there is the living fountain. *All you that thirst, come to the waters*. Isai. lv. 1.

3°. *Come and see* (Ps. 33). Many do not taste the sweetness of this manna, because they turn for sustenance to earthly things : they can only be compared to cattle that trample on delicious viands and look only for hay. . .

How should we receive ?

1°. Worthily : in the state of grace.

2°. Worthily : for an unworthy Communion, that is one in the state of mortal sin, is a horrible sacrilege : *Whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily shall be guilty of the body, and of the blood of the Lord* . . and he *eateth and drinketh judgment to himself*. 1 Cor. xi. 27, 29. . . His is the crime of Judas who by a kiss betrayed his Lord into the hands of the Jews, and then went and hanged himself. . . An unworthy Communion is (1) a horrible profanation, (2) a horrible piece of audacity, (3) horrible ingratitude—in a word, it is deicide. . .

3°. There are various grades of worthiness ; and the higher the grade, the greater the fruit. . .

4°. Worthiness springs from preparation ; and preparation too has its grades. It is necessary, and, at the same time, it is easy. . .

5°. Preparation is necessary. David, speaking of the building of the temple, said: *The work is great, for a house is prepared not for man, but for God.* 1 Paralip. xxix. 1. . . .
 Moses said to the Israelites: *In the morning you shall see the glory of the Lord.* Exod. xvi. 7. . . . *Go to the people, and sanctify them to-day . . . and let them be ready . . . for on the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai.* Exod. xix. 10.

6°. What kind of preparation is required?—It should be like the preparation at the last Supper. . . . A room was made ready, couches were laid, and an attendant entered bearing a vessel of water for the washing of hands. . . . This latter especially should be a type of our purity of soul.

7°. We are taught how to eat the pasch of the New Law by the way in which the Jews were commanded to eat the pasch of the Old Law. (Exod. xii.).

8°. We are taught by the example of Zachaeus, who immediately descended from the sycamore tree, and made preparation on hearing the words: *Make haste and come down; for this day I must abide in thy house.* Luke, xix. 5.

9°. We are taught by the example of the centurion: *Lord, I am not worthy.* . . . Matth. viii. 8.

10°. And our preparation is to be both *internal* and *external*. . . .

11°. Internal preparation is the chief thing, and consists in this, that the soul be free from sin, at least from grave sin, and imbued with good dispositions. . . .

12°. In practise what a good Christian should do is the following: (1) he should have certain fixed days for communicating; (2) he should make a good confession; (3) he should think often of the great act he is about to perform; (4) he should go early to church, with mind fully recollected; (5) he should, either with or without the aid of a book, elicit acts of faith, contrition, confidence, love, and desire; (6) he should approach the holy table modestly; (7) he should never under any circumstances turn his back immediately on his divine Host, but should converse with

Him by various acts of adoration, thanksgiving, oblation, and petition. . . (8) And in particular he should be careful to preserve the memory and the fruit of such a great gift. . .

13°. In brief a safe practical way of making a good communion is to look upon each one as if it were to be the last (for so it may be) of one's life. . .

14°. We should remember too that the better the preparation, the greater the fruit. . . If a person, for instance, were permitted to carry away as much gold as he could put into a single bag, would he not come provided with a very large one? This is an example, but at best only a crude one, of the importance of a good preparation. . .

15°. So far as preparation is concerned, there are different classes of persons: some prepare well and fervently; some negligently; some badly. . . These last, the indisposed, are as the guest who presented himself at the marriage feast *without a wedding garment*. . .

16°. There are those who receive no fruit;—those who do receive, but soon lose it;—those who receive and preserve it. . .

17°. There are many who stay away from this divine banquet, under various pretexts: (1) some say that they are not worthy; (2) some, that they have no time; (3) some, because, as they say, they derive no fruit; (4) some allege that so much piety is not necessary; (5) some, that they are too frail and weak, and that they have led too loose a life; (6) and other some, because, they say, they feel no desire. . .

18°. On the other hand, there are those who know the sweetness of this hidden manna; who say to the Lord: *How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! . . . Better is one day in thy courts above thousands. . . . They shall go from virtue to virtue. . . . Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, O Lord; they shall praise thee for ever and ever.* Ps. 83.

Peroration. Let us therefore as true and fervent children of God approach our Father's altar; let us approach often, lovingly, and with confidence. For why should we be afraid?

Here is the same Lord who said that His delight is to be with the children of men, who knows our weakness, who deigned to associate with sinners. Doing so we shall be filled with the spirit of our Father ; and, being filled, we shall walk soberly, piously, justly in this life ; and, when life is over, we shall be admitted to the eternal banquet in heaven's court. . .

VENIAL SIN.

From all appearance of evil refrain yourselves.

—1 Thess. v. 22.

He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in that which is greater ; and he that is unjust in that which is little, is unjust also in that which is greater.

—Luke, xvi. 10.

THAT the edifice of salvation and sanctification may be solid and firm, it is necessary that it be founded on the stable rock of horror for sin. All virtue and all sanctity not founded on this horror is as a house that is built on sand. It is necessary for the mind to thoroughly grasp that. And it is not sufficient that the horror should extend to mortal sin only ; it is also necessary that it should include venial sin. Venial sin is the crack in the wall of the spiritual edifice, which points to something wrong with the foundation : it is not deep enough—in other words, the horror of sin is not complete. Leaving aside the figurative and coming to the literal, I say : unless you abhor venial sin, you shall not advance in virtue, you shall not remain long unshaken in the law of God—perhaps even you may not be saved. . . .

What is meant by *horror of venial sin* ?—It is that feeling by which one is disposed to regard venial sin as next to mortal sin the greatest of all evils, and strives earnestly to avoid it, with the result that one never, or scarcely ever, deliberately falls into it ; and, in addition, labours to reduce as much as possible the semi-deliberate faults that spring from natural human frailty. Every good Christian should entertain a horror of this kind.

That we may grasp in mind, and increase in heart, this salutary horror, we shall consider :

I. Why should Venial Sin be detested ?

II. In practice how can we avoid it ?

I. Why should Venial Sin be detested ?

Because it is a great evil, whether considered in itself, or in its consequences.—*Considered in itself*, venial sin is a great evil, as is evident when we reflect that : (1) it is an offence against God ; (2) it is punishable with punishment most severe ; and (3) it is baseness and ingratitude most vile.—*In its consequences* : (1) it impedes much spiritual good ; (2) and paves the way to the greatest spiritual loss that can befall the soul.—We shall consider these points more in detail :

First Point. *Venial sin viewed in itself. It is a great evil, because it is an offence against God.*

1°. Someone may say : is not venial sin the same as slight sin ? How then can it be regarded a great evil ?—If venial sin be pronounced *slight*, it is not on its own account, but in comparison with mortal sin ; inasmuch as it does not, like mortal sin, destroy in one's soul the friendship of God ; nor completely extinguish the life of the soul ; nor is it punished by eternal torment ; nor is it so undeserving of pardon. . . . Considered, however, in itself, as it appears in the eyes of God and His Saints, it is far from being slight.

2°. What then is venial sin ? *It is an offence to the divine Majesty*, in the same way that mortal sin is, and differs from the latter only (1) by reason of lighter matter ; (2) or by reason of less consent, that is consent that is not complete, (3) or by reason of the object which is not so gravely inordinate or forbidden. . . . Therefore a small lie, a light fit of anger,

a little vanity, disobedience, or irreverence in church, or slight violation of fraternal charity—these all, if they be fully voluntary or deliberate though slight, are akin and related to mortal sin: they are from the devil, they are the spawn of hell.

3°. From mortal sin they differ only as a slight wound differs from a deadly one. Or, to put it another way, venial sin is a slight injury, mortal sin a grave injury, both offered by a son to the most loving of fathers. . . .

4°. It is an offence offered, not to a man, not even to an earthly king, but to the King of heaven, to infinite Majesty—to God. . . . Is this, tell me, a small thing?

5°. It is displeasing and odious to God, clashing as it does with His attributes—His wisdom, His will, His all holiness. It lessens the glory that otherwise would be ours. . . . Almighty God, by reason of His essence, necessarily loves Himself and His perfections, and with that same necessity He detests all even the slightest iniquity. . . .

6°. Sin must therefore be loathed to the extent in which it offends the eyes of divine sanctity: *Thy eyes are too pure to behold evil, and thou canst not look on iniquity.* Habac. i. 13.

7°. A deliberate venial sin is a foul stain on the soul: it is like a nasty ulcer on the face, a smudge of pitch on a white robe, as rust on a goblet of gold. . . .

8°. If any one of the Angels or Saints were stained with this stain, he should be instantly removed from the presence of Infinite Sanctity. And the same would be true of even the Immaculate Queen of heaven.

9°. In the opinion of S. Anselm, a single venial sin is a greater evil than would be the ruin of the whole world: in other words, it were better that the whole world should topple to ruin than that a venial sin should be committed.

10°. If all the miseries of the world could be removed by committing one venial sin, it would still not be lawful to do so.

11°. Nay even, if by a single venial sin the greatest good could be produced, if by it many other sins could be prevented,

or the world converted, or hell extinguished, even then it would not be lawful. Is it, therefore, a small thing?

12°. How do the Saints regard it? If the choice were given them between dropping into hell or committing a venial sin, they would prefer to go to hell innocent, than remain in heaven with soul stained.

13°. Also on earth Saints flee from it, and, should they have the misfortune to fall, they bitterly weep for it: we are told that S. Aloysius Gonzaga on account of two very slight faults was so overcome with sorrow that he swooned at his confessor's feet. . .

14°. Accordingly those who regard venial sin as a thing of little account must be looked upon as not having the slightest notion of what it means. . .

15°. How do people generally regard venial sin?—What does the devil think of it?—How do the Saints on earth regard it?—What of the Blessed in heaven? . .

So far we have seen that it is a great evil, because it is an offence against God, *it is also a great evil because of the punishment meted out to it either in this life or in the next.* God is just, who will not punish beyond what is deserved: therefore we can argue from punishment to gravity of offence. Now let us see:

1°. God frequently punishes venial sin in this life, as we know from S. Scripture. Lot's wife, for a little curiosity, was changed into a pillar of salt (Gen. xix).—Many of the Bethsames were slain because they looked with curiosity on the Ark (1 Kings, vi.). Oza was struck dead for touching it (2 Kings, vi.).—On account of the vanity of David in having his subjects numbered, a pestilence was sent that took off seventy thousand (2 Kings, xxiv.).—And in the New Testament it is recorded that Ananias and Saphira were punished by instant death because they told a lie. Acts, v.

2°. God severely punishes venial sin in the next life, in purgatory.—The Fathers and Doctors of the Church speak of purgatory as a mitigated hell—a temporary hell, hell minus eternity. (Aug. Sermon on the fire of purgatory).

In the third place it is a great evil, because it is baseness and ingratitude most vile.

1°. A Christian is the temple of God, which temple should be most clean. *Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord.* Ps. 92. What then if the temple of the Lord be defiled? . .

2°. A Christian is called into participation in most august mysteries. In the words of the Psalmist: *Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord, or who shall stand in his holy place? The innocent in hands, and the clean of heart.* Ps. 23.

3°. A Christian by Baptism belongs to the family, by Confirmation belongs to the army of Christ. Therefore he should be faithful, and should have no intercourse with the camp of the devil. . . But by venial sin he becomes unfaithful, he pleases the devil, he plays the part of a traitor with the adversaries of Christ; he is like a soldier who after he has taken an oath of loyalty secretly helps the enemy by supplying him with food and arms. . .

4°. A Christian receives day by day from God his most loving Father a copious outpouring of His gifts of love; therefore he is an ingrate, if he does not return love for love, but, on the contrary, does what is displeasing in the eyes of his Father.

Second Point. *Venial sin viewed in its effects or consequences.*—It is a great evil, because:

It impedes great good; namely,—fervour in the divine service, progress in holiness, purity of conscience, peace and serenity of soul, the benediction of God, and the special love that He has for a fervent soul. . . We shall add a few words about each of these:

(1) By fervour in the divine service is meant that disposition which prompts a servant of God to enter on the ways of the Lord with a big and generous heart—with the result that he feels pleasure in doing so. Venial sin destroys this feeling and begets nauseous tepidity, and flabby languour. . . See Apoc. iii. 16.

(2) We ought to advance in holiness; but, owing to venial sin, instead of going forward, we go round and round

in the ambit of our defects. . . . It is known that if a lesion should take place in a certain part of the brain, only movement in a circle would be possible—such a lesion, in the spiritual order, is venial sin. . . .

(3) That purity of conscience which makes a soul so pleasing to God, that sweet peace which makes it love only God, that special benediction which God grants to His beloved—all these are frustrated by venial sin. On the other hand, all who avoid it *shall be like a tree that is planted near the running waters.* Ps. i. 3.

(4) God's special love is only for the purest souls. In the family of Christ there are three classes of children: the hating and rebellious, namely sinners, who of course should be called enemies rather than children;—the tolerable, who are just indeed, but tepid, not seeking to please their Father in all things, but committing venial sins with ease;—and the beloved, namely those who always strive to do the will of their Father, and are careful to avoid even the slightest fault. . . .

2°. *It produces the greatest loss*; and it does so in two ways, *negatively* and *positively*. (1) *Negatively*: on account of the good it deprives us of, which of course is so much loss, and by piling up the debt to divine justice that we must pay in this life or in the next.

(2) *Positively*: (a) by tepidity, (b) by danger, nay even, certainty, of ultimate spiritual ruin. By this latter, however, it must not be understood that venial sins by coalescence can ever become a mortal sin; for venial sin no matter how multiplied does not extinguish charity. But it weakens the power, and cools the ardour of the soul. It is not death, but sickness and langour. The soul has not thereby fallen over the precipice; but it is walking on the brink of it, and that by night. . . . The fire is not yet; but the wood is dry, and by and by a slight spark cast on it by the devil will cause the conflagration. . . . *He that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little.* Eccli. xix. 1. . . . *Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth.* Apoc. iii. 16.

(3) The reasons for this danger are to be found in : (a) the withdrawal of more abundant grace ; (b) the force of bad habit, which is gradually acquired ; (c) the artifice of the devil, who sets venial sin as a snare to catch those whom he cannot suddenly precipitate into the abyss of mortal sin. . .

Grave, therefore, are the evils of venial sin, both for the good that is lost thereby, and the evil that is found therein. . .

II. In practice how can we avoid it ?

1°. As explained at the beginning, we are to conceive a true and thorough hatred of such an evil ; and for this salutary hatred we must send up our prayer to God. . .

2°. And if the hatred be true it will be efficacious, that is it will lead us to labour earnestly to eradicate so great an evil from the soul.

3°. For complete freedom of soul, past sin must be expiated, and the soul must put itself on guard for the future. . .

4°. It is necessary that each one should know the venial sins to which he is most addicted. . . Accordingly a careful examination should be made as to those that are wont to be committed, whether in regard to God, to oneself, to one's neighbour, or in connection with one's state in life . . also what sins are committed more frequently either in thought, in affection, in word, in works, by negligence, or by omission. . .

5°. It is expedient to fight in particular against one's predominant fault. . .

6°. We must pray and watch. Prayer is for strength ; watchfulness that we may not be found off our guard, which latter is a frequent occasion of fall. . . And this watchfulness should extend to the mind, the affections of the heart, and to the senses. . .

7°. All pretexts should be brushed aside : such as excusing ourselves because of our health, or disposition, or on the score that others do the same. . .

8°. We must practise mortification, and make the victory over ourselves sweeping and complete. . .

9°. We must practise the nightly examination of conscience, especially the particular examination. . .

Peroration. By observing these things, we shall avoid all venial faults, at least so far as it is given to human frailty to do so ; we shall build the edifice of our salvation on a solid foundation ; we shall acquire that purity of conscience that is so desirable ; and, at the same time, we shall receive and enjoy all the graces and blessings that are the portion of those who have nothing to do with sin. . .

SPECIAL HEADINGS.

I. Why must venial sin be fought against ?—II. What venial sins must be specially guarded against ?—R. 1° All that are fully deliberate ; 2° Those that are most frequently committed in regard to God, our neighbour, or ourselves.—III. How can we fight against them with success ?—R. 1° By forming a firm resolution ; 2° by removing the cause or causes ; 3° by applying the means, which means are contained as it were *in compendium* in the particular examination of conscience.

I. Venial sin can be called *small* only in comparison with mortal sin . . in itself it is really grave. . . II. It entails most dire consequences. For 1° it lessens the fervour of love, and impedes actual graces, etc. ; 2° it gradually leads to mortal sin ; 3° in many cases it is difficult to draw a line of demarcation between venial and mortal sin.

I. The consequences of venial sin are :—1° The spiritual good that we miss through diminution of graces, loss of merit, and of God's special providence ; . . 2° the evil that arises, by the soul beginning to grow tepid, by losing as it were its fine quality or temperament, by its tendency to become squalid, by its inclination to go back, by its becoming more and more withdrawn from God, and the piling up of an immense debt to be paid ; . . 3° and finally the awful danger of ultimate ruin by falling into the abyss of mortal sin.—II. Other consequences are the punishments that await it, for God severely punishes venial sin, 1° in this life . . 2° and in purgatory, with pain of loss and pain of sense. *That fire of purgatory, says S. Augustine, is more terrible than anything that in the way of pain can be seen, felt or imagined in this life.* (Serm. 41, the Saints).

PURGATORY.

*It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the
the dead.*—2 Mach. xii. 46.

VERY frequent and very prominent amongst the Church's many forms of piety is that of offering prayers for the souls of those who are detained in Purgatory. . . . And rightly so ; for this devotion is most pleasing to God, is eagerly looked for by the deceased faithful, and is exceedingly salutary for the living. . . . So salutary indeed is this devotion, that he who practises it according to the spirit of the Church, has therein a pledge of his salvation. . . . It is, therefore, a devotion to be fostered ; and, with a view to doing so, we shall reflect on the following considerations :

I. What does Faith teach regarding Purgatory ?

II. Why should we assist the souls there ?

I. What does Faith teach ?

1°. The Council of Trent (Sess. 25) in its decree regarding Purgatory says : *The Catholic Church, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, and relying on Sacred Scripture and the ancient tradition of the Fathers, teaches that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls detained there are helped by our prayers, especially by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar.*¹ In the decree of the Council of Florence (decreto Unionis Graecor.) we read : *If the truly penitent die in the love of God before they have satisfied by*

¹ *Catholica Ecclesia, Spiritu sancto edocta, ex sacris Litteris et antiqua Patrum traditione, docet Purgatorium esse, animasque ibi detentas, fidelium suffragiis, potissimum vero acceptabili altaris sacrificio, juvari.*

worthy fruits of penance for sins of commission and omission, we define that their souls are purified after death by the pains of Purgatory ; and that the suffrages of the living faithful help in relieving them from those pains, namely the offering of Masses, prayers, alms-deeds, and other works of piety which are usually offered by the faithful for other members of the faithful, according to the decrees of the Church. . . Therefore, as there is a heaven, and a hell, so too there is a purgatory : which is a place of expiation and punishment in which souls are held captive who have departed from life without being sufficiently pure to enter at once into the presence of the God of infinite sanctity.

2°. The souls that appear before the supreme judge can be divided into three classes : (1) Those who are corrupt to the core, like putrid corpses, the victims through mortal sin of His wrath—they go to the place prepared for them, to hell ; (2) the pure souls, free from sin and stain, precious in His sight—they enter the eternal tabernacles ; (3) others who are not without the beauty of charity, but whose beauty is obscured either by venial sin, or the effects of sin forgiven ; they, like precious vessels stained with rust, go to where the rust is removed—to purgatory.

3°. These souls are dear to God, and loved by Him ; but, because not fully pure, they cannot as yet enter into His presence. They might be compared to Absalom, who, after his exile, obtained pardon from his father David, but still was not admitted into his presence : *Let him return into his house, and let him not see my face.* 2 Kings, xiv. 24. . .

4°. What then are those debts that are to be paid ? Or, in other words, why are souls detained in purgatory ? . . The debts to be atoned for by punishment are those contracted through venial sin, or those which remain after mortal sin has been forgiven.—You see, then, that they spring from two sources. . . Now temporary punishment must be paid either in this life, or in the next : here, easily and to an indulgent Father ; there, severely and to an inexorable Judge, whose eye no fault, however small it may appear, shall escape. . .

5°. How do the souls in purgatory expiate their debt?—By the twofold pain of loss and of sense. . . The pain of sense consists in sufferings which are indicated by St. Paul, when he says : *He shall be saved, yet so as by fire.* 1 Cor. iii. 15. Of this fire the Fathers and Doctors of the Church speak in terms of fear and dread. S. Augustine (on Ps. 37), says : *That fire shall be more terrible than anything in this life, and you know what that means.* . . There, says the Imitation, *one hour of pain shall be more severe than a hundred years of penance here.* Although these words are directly spoken of hell, they can be applied here, since purgatory is represented by the Doctors of the Church as a mitigated hell, surpassing in bitterness all the austerities of the anchorites.

6°. How long?—S. Matthew answers : *Amen I say to you, thou shalt not go out from thence till thou repay the last farthing.* v. 26. And when shall that be repaid? It is a secret reserved to divine justice. This only we know, the Church offers sacrifice and prayers for the dead for many years after their death. S. Augustine prayed for his mother, saint though she was, for over thirty years after her death. This too we know, the fire of purgatory consumes the rust of the soul, and the deeper the rust the longer the time. But even if it lasted only a few days, would not that punishment be still a thing to be dreaded? What if a judge in this life condemned one to suffer the torment of fire for just one day? . . And this finally we know, that, however long be the time of expiation, it must be gone through unless alleviation is procured by the living. For themselves those souls can do nothing, neither by weeping nor by penance, they can only look to us ; but we, while still enjoying the privileged time of mercy and merit, can assist them.

7°. Shall I go to purgatory? Not a doubt about it—that is, if I have the happiness to be saved. . . How then can I make it as light and as brief as possible? R. (1) By avoiding sins and faults through which the debt is contracted ; (2) by expiating, while there is time, the debt already contracted ; (3) by relieving the souls that are detained there ;

(4) and by loving God fervently, because the fire of charity extinguishes the fire of purgatory. . .

8°. How can the souls in purgatory be assisted? Brethren, reflect and see what a wonderful consolation is vouchsafed to us by the divine clemency, that we have it in our power to mitigate the sufferings, and to shorten the time, of the souls of our fellow beings, of our own kith and kin, who are in purgatory! This privilege is in the hands of each one, neither are riches nor human power needed, but simply prayer, almsgiving, penance, or any good work, especially the Sacrifice of the Mass, and the application of indulgences. In fact we have the key of purgatory in our hands. No wonder then that the souls suffering there turn so eagerly to us. Shall we be deaf to their pleading cry, or shall we do all in our power to aid them? . . .

II. Why should we assist the souls in Purgatory?

1°. Because they are our most afflicted brethren, the depth of whose need is the measure and title of their claim on us. Because, perhaps, they are our friends and relations. Because, moreover, they may be there for their too great love for us. Because they cannot assist themselves. And because we can easily do so. . .

2°. Because it is a work of charity most pleasing to God, one in which all the corporal works of mercy are focussed, it being food to the hungry, and drink to the thirsty. . .

3°. Because we are so earnestly urged thereto by the Church, who invites us by many voices, some articulate, and some in the silent eloquence of appeal: her cemeteries, her bells, her commemorations, her prayers in the Mass. . . As it is to-day, so it was from the beginning, as witness Tertullian: *On an appointed day each year we make oblations for the dead.* (De Corona milit. 3).

4°. Because the souls there suffering make earnest appeal to us. . .

5°. And by so doing we are making provision for ourselves. *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.* Matth. v. 7.—*Judgment without mercy to him that hath not done mercy.* James, ii. 13.

6°. Do you wish that your purgatory be light and brief? Do you wish to get much help in your day of need? Then give much help to those souls. . .

7°. The work, in addition, is salutary, because by it we are reminded how terrible is sin, even that which appears light to us. . . As also we are reminded how we are to use the time given to us for the paying of our debts. . .

8°. All motives, therefore, urge us, on the part of the souls, on the part of God, and those in our own behalf. . .

Peroration. We can conclude in those words of the Evangelist: *Give, and it shall be given to you; good measure and pressed down and shaken together and running over shall they give into your bosom. For with the same measure that you shall mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.* Luke, vi. 38.

CHRIST THE MODEL OF CHRISTIANS.

FIRST DISCOURSE.

IMITATION OF CHRIST.

Look and make it according to the pattern that was shown thee in the mount.—Exod. xxv. 40.

Whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be made conformable to the image of his Son.—Rom. viii. 29.

Precept is one thing, example another. Both indeed tend in the same direction, with, however, this difference, to be guided by precept alone is to take the full sweep of the road, but to follow example is to tread a path that is short and sure. Or, putting it another way, we can adapt an old proverb and say : an ounce of example is worth a pound of precept. This is strikingly evident in the arts, for instance in the painting of a picture. What, you will ask, is the bearing of this on our subject ? It is the following : since Christian perfection is so important an affair, it was meet that we should be taught it by both *precept* and *example*. And such has been the case ; for the Eternal Father has sent us, not merely a saint, but the king of saints, who by the force of example says to us : *Look and make it according to the pattern.*

Coming to detail we shall ask three questions :

I. Who is our model ?

II. Why should we imitate Him ?

III. How can we do so ?

I. Who is our model?

Jesus Christ is our model, *true* and *perfect*.

1°. He is our *true model*. What is a model? In the physical order it is a form to be imitated, to be reproduced in something else; hence we speak of the form or model of a sculptor or of an architect. . . In the moral order a model is any person whose life is proposed as an object for imitation. In this sense we say: such a son is a model for others; such a servant is a model of fidelity, and so forth.—The term *example* is properly applied to a laudable action which is proposed for imitation, and it differs from a *model* or *exemplar* in this, that the latter terms are applicable not so much to a single action, as to a full-rounded life, and, accordingly, are usually used of the man himself rather than of any particular action he performs.

Christ is not only our example but our model; His whole life is held up to us by the Father for our imitation: *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* Matth. iii. 17;—*Whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be made conformable to the image of his Son.* Rom. viii. 29;—*Behold the man!* John, xix. 5;—*Look and make it according to the pattern that was shown thee in the mount.* Exod. xxv. 40. . . Here then is the model for every Christian; to whom the nearer he approaches the more perfect he becomes. Herein, and not in riches or in power, must be sought the standard of human greatness. . .

2°. He is our *perfect model*, both in Himself and in regard to us.—In Himself: He is an exemplar (1) most noble, by reason of His person, (2) and absolute, by reason of His works. In regard to us He is a model (1) most clear and evident; (2) most universal; (3) and most efficacious. . . Let us reflect a little on each of these points:—

3°. He is an *exemplar most noble*.

The more excellent the personality of him who is to serve as a model, the more efficaciously he compels imitation. Hence, for the sheer force of his position, the influence a

king possesses ; and from this arises the saying (which is at least largely true) : *the world is kingly in its imitation*. . . But the model proposed to us is not a mere king, but the noblest personality who has ever graced and elevated the human race, that model being no other than the only begotten Son of the most high God. . .

4°. He is an *absolute exemplar*. (1) He is so, for the reason just indicated—surely there can be no more perfect model than eternal infinite wisdom ; (2) He is so, because in Him there is no defect, not even the slightest shadow of stain ; (3) and He is that absolute model in every state of life ; in His mortal life . . in His eucharistic life . . in the immortal and glorious life with which He clothed Himself at His Resurrection. . . And the same is true of the various conditions and phases of His life, whether it be His hidden life, His public life, His life of labour, or life of sorrow. . . Everything, from the manger to the cross, His every action, His every footstep, has been a model for us ; and of each and all He implicitly says, what He expressly stated to the disciples after he had washed their feet : *I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also*. John, xiii. 15. . . (4) And, finally, He is that model *most absolute*, not only by exhibiting in His life all the virtues, but also by manifesting them in their highest splendour. . . Not so the Saints : one excelled in patience, another in meekness, another shone in charity ; but Christ in all, all at the same time, and all in an incomparable degree ; so that the Saints in comparison with Him are as single sparks to a great fire. . .

5°. How great is the beauty of Christ, and how glorious must that beauty appear in the eyes of His Father ! In Sacred Scripture He is frequently referred to as the son of man : *man* indeed He is, the *man* by excellence, the *man* truly worthy of the name : *Beautiful above the sons of men*. Ps. xlv. 3. In Him fully shines the image of the most High, *according to which man was created*, Gen. i. 26, and *according to which we are to put on the new man* . . *created in justice and holiness of truth*. Ephes. iv. 24.

6°. He is an exemplar *most clear and evident*.

Christ our Lord is raised up, and shines for the whole world, like the sun in the meridian. . . No veil can hide Him, except that alone which one deliberately draws across one's own eyes. . . Most evident: *The root of Jesse standeth for an ensign of the people.* Isai. xi. 10 ;—*The salvation which the Lord has prepared before the face of all peoples . . . a light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel* (see Luke, ii. 31) ;—*As Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the son of man be lifted up.* John, iii. 14 ;—*Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, that it may shine to all that are in the house.* Matth. v. 15. . . Most evident: in that He is easily understood. Most evident: not like a statue, which is seen indeed but which few can imitate. The example of Christ can be seen and imitated by all, the ignorant as well as the learned—His obedience, His patience, His suffering, how he loved, and how He prayed. Christ is the mirror in which all can contemplate the true image of sanctity; the book which all who open can read. . .

7°. He is a *universal exemplar*: for every generation, place and time;—for all states and conditions;—for all ages and vicissitudes of life. . . Accordingly, not for those of His time only, who with their eyes saw His infancy, His youth, His labours, His patience, His doing good, has He shone, but likewise, with the same light, He has shone for all since, He shines for all to-day, and He will shine for all who are yet unborn. His example is like to the sun, which has lighted the world from the beginning until now. . . *Jesus Christ, yesterday, and to-day, and the same for ever.* Hebr. xiii. 8. . . Him as a model the Apostles had before their eyes: *Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ.* 1 Cor. iv. 16. So too had the martyrs, the anchorites, the virgins, and all the faithful, through the course of ages, and to-day. . . Everywhere His image appears—in every church in Christendom; while it is stamped on the mind of all the faithful; the model for all collectively, and of each one individually. No one so high, no one so rich, no one so poor, no one so holy, no one

so great a sinner, but Jesus is still the exemplar and model for imitation. . . Who and what are you? Are you just? Are you a sinner? Are you young? Are you of full years? Look and see the pattern that is shown you—Jesus is your model. . .

8°. He is an exemplar *most efficacious*. By this I mean that He is not only the pattern to which we are to aspire, but He gives us positive assistance to do so. Let us contrast the difference between Christ as model and the ordinary force of example. There is a common saying that *example draws*. Yes it does, by moving us to imitation, and by indicating the way and method. But beyond this it cannot go; it cannot, for instance, give us strength, or help us by increasing our powers. To give a few illustrations: a picture can stimulate to art, but it cannot give creative genius to a pupil; a king can set an example of fortitude to a soldier, but he cannot give him strength when he is exhausted, nor can he heal him when he is wounded. Thus example has certain effects, but it has likewise its limitations. . . Not so in the case of Christ; He is not only our model, but He excites our soul, and gives it strength to attain to that model. His image stamps itself in light on the contemplating mind: *We all beholding the glory of the Lord with open face, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory.* 2 Cor. iii. 18. . . Hence the extraordinary effects we see in the Church—the just, in varying degree, approaching their archetype, and sinners quitting vice. . .

II. Why should our exemplar be imitated?

1°. Because God the Father and Christ Jesus invite us to do so.—And in like manner the Apostles: *Be ye therefore followers of God, as most dear children.* Ephes. v. 1. . . *For unto this are you called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow his steps.* 1 Peter, ii. 21.

2°. Because it is so glorious to do so. What a noble object of ambition it is to follow God Himself. . . to be like to

the prince of the human race . . . to attain to the highest glory that is possible for man ! *It is great glory to follow the Lord.* Eccli. xxiii. 38.

3°. Because our exemplar is so perfect (as discussed above).

4°. Because the soul blurred by sin should be polished, so that God can again see His face and image in it.

5°. For this was I born, for this am I placed here, that I may ever bear God's likeness. For this must I work and strive. And in so doing I must imitate at the same time the combined work of painter and sculptor : both strive after a model, the one by adding, the other by removing. And so with me, I must chisel away my faults, and add virtues.

6°. And my soul will bear an image whether I like it or not. It cannot remain an empty canvas, a *tabula rasa* : it must bear either the image of God or that of the devil—the beast of the Apocalypse. Apoc. xiii.

7°. Which should it be ? Doubtless the former : I am a Christian, a disciple of Christ by Baptism and name ; and I am under contract, in virtue of the sacrament, that *I be as my master.* See Matth. x. 25.

8°. If, for instance, one had it in one's power to mould and beautify the body into a form that could be preserved for ever, with what earnestness would one labour ! This, though imaginary in regard to the body, is precisely what can be done in case of the soul. . . .

9°. Whosoever does not bear the image of the Son of God shall not enter into the glory of the Father : *Whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be made conformable to the image of his Son.* Rom. viii. 29.

10°. Finally, if I here bear the image of Christ suffering, I shall later bear the image of Christ glorified : *For the Spirit himself giveth testimony . . . that we are the sons of God . . . and joint-heirs with Christ : yet so, if we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him.* Rom. viii. 16, 17.

III. How can we imitate Him ?

1°. Not as bad Christians, not as weak, flabby, inconstant Christians, but as Christians strong and brave and persevering : *So run that you may obtain.* 1 Cor. ix. 24.

2°. There are as many classes of Christians as there are various ways of imitating Christ.

3°. Impediments must be removed. The eyes especially must be turned away from evil example.—*Turn away thy eyes that they may not behold vanity.* Ps. cxviii. 37—and must be directed towards Christ. Think of Christ frequently ; think of Him in church when you see the crucifix ; think of Him when you see the vestments of the priest ; think of Him when you look at the tabernacle door ; think of Him in every sorrow, affliction and temptation ; think of Him when bad example surrounds you ; and above all think of Him in His bitter passion and death. . . . And, while thinking of Him, recall whither He is ever pointing you the way—to resurrection and to glory. . . .

4°. And the example or image of Christ can be considered in the lives of the Saints, reflected there as in a mirror. Or it is like the image of the sun in water, shining with tempered radiance, and for that reason more easily examined.

5°. But we must not content ourselves with thinking only, we must likewise put our hand to work. *Look and make it according to the pattern.* Exod. xxv. 40. He will help us to do so. In this connection the old proverb holds good : *One becomes a tradesman only by working at a trade.* . . .

6°. And we should do so *consistently*, not falling back in presence of difficulties ; *perseveringly*, up to the very time of a happy death ; *joyfully*, with eyes ever on the image of His glory. . . .

7°. And diligently in everything, be it a something to be done, or a something to be suffered or endured ; by asking myself in every circumstance that may occur : *What would Christ do here, what would Christ say ?*

8°. To use again the illustration of the artist : a painter in reproducing a picture concentrates his whole attention

in adhering to the original. And so should we act : our life is the canvas to be painted ; we are the artists ; Christ is the model.

9°. Or, to use another illustration and one frequently referred to in Sacred Scripture, we might compare the work of our salvation to the building of an edifice. The foundation should be laid deep in faith ; we should work on the scaffolding of hope, diligently plying the chisel of mortification and the mallet of patience ; and the building withal should be ornamented with the varying colours of our acts of charity. . .

10°. Leaving the figurative and coming again to the literal, I say that our Blessed Lord must be imitated in His humility, His charity, His patience and in His suffering.

Peroration. If we do this, we shall become the children of God in reality as well as in name ; we shall be like the only begotten Son in whom the Father was well pleased. . . This likeness is externally hidden for the present, but the day will come when we shall bear it in the light of glory : *Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God ; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like to him, because we shall see him as he is.* 1 John, iii. 2.

SPECIAL HEADINGS.

A Christian is bound to follow Christ :—I. Because He is his king, by title of creation, redemption, and ownership derived from the Father, *who hath given all things into his hand.* John, iii. 35.—II. Because every Christian has solemnly promised obedience in Baptism.

To follow Christ—I. It is an honour : on account of the excellence of the leader, as also the end and conditions of service. How great the difference between the reward offered by Christ, and the wages doled out by kings of this world, to earn which men go to such difficulty !—II. It is easy and sweet : the way is even, for He, by going before, has made it straight ; help is at hand, for He supplies it ; and we meet many companions on the way, who animate us.

I. To imitate Christ is to be animated with the spirit of Christ, so that Christ lives in us : *I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me.* Gal. ii. 20. . . . Wherefore the life of a Christian ought to be such, that Christ should live, 1°. in his eyes, so that he may turn aside from vanity, and aspire to heaven, and look with charity on his neighbour,—2°. in his ears,—3°. in his mouth and tongue,—4°. in his hands and feet,—5°. in his heart,—in a word, in his body and soul. . . . II. And imitation of this kind is necessary, because *if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his.* Rom. viii. 9.

CHRIST THE MODEL OF CHRISTIANS.—*Continued.*

SECOND DISCOURSE.

KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST.

Now this is eternal life, that they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.—John, xvii. 3.

IN the knowledge and love of our Lord Jesus Christ, the whole perfection of man, his wisdom, and his happiness, consist. Love depends on knowledge ; since what is not known cannot be loved ; and, on the other hand, that which is known to be good and beautiful and desirable is naturally loved—all the more if it has those qualities in a supereminent degree. And can such an object be found ? Yes, in the person of Christ Jesus, who is no other than loveliness supreme, visible in human form. *For through the mystery of the Word incarnate a new light of divine effulgence has flashed in on the eyes of our mind : that through knowing God in visible form we are drawn into the love of the invisible.* (Preface of Nativity). . . Now in view of all this, our knowledge of Jesus Christ should be not merely speculative, but practical, and, as it were, experimental—the outcome of experience, such knowledge as the Apostles had : *That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word of life : for the life was manifested . . . which was with the Father, and hath appeared to us.* 1 John, i. 1.—S. Paul speaking of this knowledge says : *I count all things to be but loss for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord . . . that I may know him, and the*

power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings. Phil. iii. 8, 10.—That we may acquire this eminent and so salutary knowledge, we shall consider :

I. Who is Christ ?

II. What are our relations to Him ?

I. Who is Christ ?

Who is He viewed in Himself, that is, in His person, and in His gifts—in the treasures at His disposal?—Who is He as viewed in His life, whether corporal or mystical?—Who is He in His teaching?—Who is He in regard to God?—Who is He in regard to the world and to us?

1°. If Christ be considered in His person, He is the glory of the whole human race, in comparison with whom kings and princes, men of wisdom, and saints, vanish into insignificance. He alone, resplendent with celestial light and majesty, *is beautiful above the sons of men.* Ps. xlv. 3. What the sun is to the stars; what King Saul was amongst his people; what Joseph was to his brothers when they entered Egypt—that and more Christ is amongst men.

2°. Christ is a divine person.—A man eminent amongst men, He is also God, the second person of the most holy Trinity. What a glory to the human race to be able to count God amongst its sons! . . . O thought incomprehensible yet true! the son of man, Jesus of Nazareth, is true God, possessing divine nature with all its attributes: eternity, immensity, infinity, wisdom, goodness, and infinite power. . . . And that same God is our brother and flesh of our flesh!

3°. And not only a divine person, but also true man, that is, He has a perfect human nature, consisting of body and soul with all human faculties. The Holy Spirit Himself formed His human flesh from the flesh of Mary, endowing it with a soul such as became the king of the human race: and this is what we mean by Christ's humanity. . . . This humanity was immolated on the cross, but afterwards rose

glorious and immortal. And in comparison with the risen Jesus, Roman conquerors, kings on their throne, and even Solomon in all his glory, would appear but as unclean lepers. . .

4°. And this same divine Jesus is everything to me : my king, my father, my brother, and the spouse of my soul. . .

5°. Everything to me, and comes to me with His hands full of treasures : *In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.* Coloss. ii. 3. Namely : (1) treasures of light and truth ; (2) treasures of grace and sanctity ; (3) treasures of humility, patience, fortitude and all charity.—*Of his fulness we have all received.* John, i. 16 ; (4) treasures of glory, to be later communicated to us as co-heirs ; which glory Peter calls *an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that cannot fade, reserved in heaven for you.* 1 Pet. i. 4.

6°. Who is Christ as viewed in His life or existence ?—His existence must not be restricted to the thirty-three years that He visibly spent on earth ; but it reaches before and after. . . Christ pre-existed in figure and prophecy, and He post-exists, and post-endures in Himself and in His faithful. *He shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever.* Luke, i. 32. *Jesus Christ yesterday, and to-day, and the same for ever.* Hebr. xiii. 8. Christ pre-existed in His divine nature formally, in His human nature figuratively. *Abraham your father rejoiced that he might see my day : he saw it and was glad. The Jews therefore said to him : Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham ? Jesus said to them : Amen, amen I say to you, before Abraham was made, I am.* John, viii. 56–58. . . And S. Paul, speaking of the rock from which the Israelites drank in the desert, says : *The rock was Christ. . . Now all these things happened to them in figure.* 1 Cor. x. 4, 11. In fact the whole Old Testament is as a mirror that reflects the image of Christ, and more clearly even than the image of God the Creator is reflected in the works of nature.

Again the life of Christ is in part *corporal*, and in part *spiritual* or *mystic*.

7°. Who is Christ in His *corporal* life? He is the only begotten Son of God, who, after the fulness of time, *was seen upon earth, and conversed with men.* Baruch. iii. 38. . . *And dwelt amongst us.* John, i. 14. . . He came into the world by His nativity; He went from the world by His ascension. . . His corporal life has many phases, and for that reason is known by many names—His infancy, His hidden life, His public life, His life of labour, of sorrow, of glory, and His eucharistic life.

8°. Who is Christ viewed in His mystic life? By this we mean Christ in the souls of the faithful, in the body of the Church, in its head and members. . . In the souls of the faithful He lives a life entirely spiritual, consisting in grace, and the universal influx, which the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, by His indwelling produces. *God hath sent the spirit of his Son into your hearts.* Gal. iv. 6. . . *Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body indeed is dead, because of sin; but the spirit liveth, because of justification.* Rom. viii. 9, 10.

Hence S. Paul says: *I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me.* Gal. ii. 20.

Christ lives in the Church as the soul in the body: the Church is His mystic body, we His members, *of his flesh, and of his bones.* Ephes. v. 30. . . In the entire flock, in His pastors and in His sheep, Christ lives and works and prays and ministers and sacrifices and teaches and governs and suffers and triumphs: *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME?* Acts. ix. 4. . . *He that heareth you, heareth me.* Luke, x. 16. . . Whatever therefore men do to the Church, be it good or be it evil, they do to Christ: *As long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me.* Matth. xxv. 40.

9°. Who is Christ considered in His teaching? . . . Do you wish to know the image of His heart? Here it is: humility and charity, or the *cross and life.* . . This, Christ's teaching, is, as Christ Himself, immortal, ever living, ever reigning, ever efficacious: *Heaven and earth shall pass, but my words shall not pass.* Matth. xxiv. 35. . . *The word of God is not bound.* 2 Tim. ii. 9.

10°. Who is Christ in regard to God? . . He is the legate, the Angel, the Apostle of God, His only and begotten Son, light of light, true God of true God, the image of the invisible God, the splendour of the Father, and figure of His substance. He is the Son of God, beloved beyond all others, in whom the Father is well pleased. . . The Son and heir, heir of heaven and earth . . the just, the holy, the man perfect after God's own heart, and doing His will in all things.

11°. Who is He in regard to the world and us? He is the Creator and Redeemer . . the beginning and end . . through whom, and on account of whom, all things were made. . . He is the centre of the world, to which all things converge and are referred. . . Of the human race, yes of the angelic hosts, He is the head, the prince, the immortal king. And not only is He our king, but our father also, our pastor, our friend, our brother, our way, our truth, and our life. . . In a word, He is to us all things in all: *How hath he (the Father) not also, with him, given us all things.* Rom. viii. 32. . . *Christ is all, and in all.* Coll. iii. 11. . . He is our whole hope, our entire good, the glory of our race and nature. *Our sufficiency is from God.* 2 Cor. iii. 5. . . In Christ, all things; without Him, nothing. . .

II. What are our relations to Christ?

1°. They are not merely mental, consisting in memory only, such as history preserves of the great who have been. Our relations to Christ are (1) entirely present, real, and very actual. Of Jesus and the influx of His spirit on us, we can say what S. Paul said of the divine nature: *He is not far from every one of us; for in him we live, and move, and are.* Acts, xvii. 27, 28. . . (2) In addition, some of those relations are general and some particular. . . (3) They are necessary, and, at the same time, to the well disposed, most salutary and most sweet.

2°. As to its relation in general, the whole world depends on Christ, is enlightened, sustained and ruled by Christ . .

and one day it shall be judged by Him. . . The most telling comparison we can use is that of the sun which so illumines the world that *no one can hide himself from his heat*. Ps. xviii. 7. The face of the earth may change, generations may come and go, but the same sun ever shines in the heavens. . . And so with Christ, *yesterday, and to-day, and the same for ever*. Hebr. xiii. 8. . . Notwithstanding, there are men so perverse that they not only wish to withdraw themselves from Christ's influence, but even deny and blaspheme Him, saying: *The clouds are his covert, and he doth not consider our things*. Job, xxii. 14. . . *We will magnify our tongue; our lips are our own; who is Lord over us?* Ps. xi. 5. . . Such have now their day; but the Lord has uttered words of dreadful warning: *Hereafter you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven*. Matth. xxvi. 64. And then shall be fulfilled what the Apostle says of the majesty of His name: *That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth*. Phil. ii. 10.

3°. Nor is this all. Christ's dominion extends to each one of us, and as closely touches us as if no one else existed: it is like the rays of the all ruling sun, which fall on the least grain of sand equally as on the spreading branches of the Cedars of Lebanon. . .

4°. He is in touch with us by act present and efficacious. Although no longer visible on earth, He is none the less present to us than He was to the Apostles and those who walked with Him. It is not sufficient to picture Jesus as seated on His throne, and merely looking down on the thoughts and actions of men. That to be sure is true; but it is not enough. We should grasp well that He is just as intimately present to us as if He again visibly walked the earth. We have already used the illustration of the sun lighting up all parts of the earth. That also is true, but not sufficient; because there is the great essential difference that the sun does not in substance come down to earth. But Jesus does. While not ceasing to dwell in heaven, He, at the same time, by multiplied substantial presence, inhabits the earth and dwells amongst men.

5°. He is in touch with us intrinsically and intimately : in our intellect and will, through grace, through faith, through hope, through charity. . . . Through charity in particular we are imbued with His thoughts and affections—in the words of the Apostle, *we put on Christ*. . . .

6°. He is in touch with us extrinsically : He speaks *to* us in instruction ; He speaks *with* us in prayer ; He visits and nourishes us in the Eucharist, and He heals us in other sacraments. He offers Himself to be honoured, loved and assisted, in the person of His ministers and the poor ; He tells us what is His will, and the works we are to perform ; and while we are performing them, He helps, visits and embraces us. In brief, He is always with us in our journey through life. . . .

7°. And He is in touch with us in every way, at all times, and under all circumstances. He sees me, He hears me, He accompanies me, He directs me, He helps me, He consoles me, He remains in me, He works in me, He transforms me into the image of Himself. . . .

Conclusion.—Alas ! how many there are who neither know nor see these sweet relations ! And, as a result, how many who have no idea of the treasures that they possess in Christ Jesus ! They have eyes and see not : they are like the disciples on the way to Emmaus when *their eyes were held, that they should not know him*. Luke, xxiv. 16. . . . Faith forsooth is wanting, for they are *slow of heart to believe* (ibid. 25). . . . May such be not our lot, but rather the ready heart-felt faith of Martha ! *Yea, Lord, I have believed that thou art Christ the Son of the living God, who art come into this world*. John, xi. 27. . . . But do thou, O Lord, more and more *increase our faith* (Luke, xvii. 5), that *in thy light we shall see light* (Ps. xxxv. 10), and *may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent*. John, xvii. 3.

CHRIST THE MODEL OF CHRISTIANS.—(Continued).

THIRD DISCOURSE.

LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.

Abide in my love.—John, xv. 9.

If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema.—1 Cor. xvi. 22.

To the love of God and our Lord Jesus Christ, the whole Christian law is directed as its end and aim: *The end of the commandment is charity.* 1 Tim. i. 5. Or, to put it briefly, the end of the law is love of our Lord Jesus Christ, since love of Him includes love of the Father: *He that seeth me, seeth the Father also. . . I am in the Father, and the Father in me.* John, xiv. 9, 10. Hence He adds: *He that loveth me, shall be loved by my Father.* John, xiv. 21. This love, therefore is the fruit of the Christian religion, and towards it that religion tends, as naturally as the vine brings forth the grape. . . He who has the love of Jesus Christ has all things: he who is without it is poor indeed, is destitute of all things: *If I have not charity, I am nothing.* 1 Cor. xiii. 2. Accordingly it is necessary that we strive to acquire this treasure, and augment it more and more. With a view to doing so, it will be helpful to consider the following:

I. Why must Jesus Christ be loved?

II. How can we offer Him due love?

1. Why must Jesus Christ be loved ?

Because He is in Himself most lovable,—because He so loves us,—because He is the fountain of all good,—and because love of Him perfects the lover in wonderful manner. . . We shall consider each of these points.

1°. Jesus is most lovable in Himself. Not since the sons of Adam began to be multiplied on earth, down to this our day, has there arisen one that can be compared with Jesus son of David. . . Beautiful in form beyond the children of men, He is the beloved Son in whom the Father Himself was well pleased. . . To Him apply in eminent degree the words of the Psalmist (xliv. 3), *Thou art beautiful above the sons of men* ; yes with a beauty that necessarily attracts the eye and captivates the heart of all who are rightly disposed : *With thy comeliness and thy beauty set out, proceed prosperously, and reign.* Ps. xliv. 5.

To know Jesus Christ is to love Him ; and in order to know Him, we must consider Him in His divinity and His humanity.

(1) Jesus is lovable in His divinity. Jesus of Nazareth, the humble son of Mary, is at the same time the Son of God, in whom *dwellleth all the fulness of the Godhead corporally*. Coll. ii. 9. God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, in whom are eternity and immensity, wisdom and sanctity, power and infinite goodness. In Him is beauty ever satisfying and never failing, which the Seraphim contemplate, adore and love ; and from the ardour of their love derive their names of fire. . . For seeing only the reflection of this beauty, the face of Moses so shone that he had to hide it from his people—reflected light still lingered there, and they could not look upon his face.

(2) And Jesus is lovable in His humanity—in soul and in body.

(a) In His soul. Beautiful is every human soul, because it is created to God's image ; still more beautiful when transfused and elevated by sanctifying grace, thus becoming

in the eyes of God as a beloved spouse : *Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun ?* Cant. vi. 9. . . . What then must be said of the soul of Jesus, which amongst the souls of men is as the sun to the stars ? . . . What wisdom of intellect ! What sanctity of heart ! What treasures of all the virtues ! . . .

(b) And in His body. That body, created by the Holy Ghost from the most pure blood of Mary, is a tabernacle worthy of the soul and illuminated with all its splendours. . . . It was indeed at one time humiliated and subjected to suffering ; but at the resurrection it was re-formed by the Father, and endowed with immortality and the other qualities of a glorified body. *Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee.* Ps. ii. . . . Of the just on the last day, the Lord has said : *Then shall the just shine as the sun, in the kingdom of their father.* Matth. xiii. 43. What then is to be said of the king of the just ? . . . He manifested a slight ray of His glory on Mount Thabor, and Peter instantly exclaimed : *Lord it is good for us to be here.* . . . He revealed to some of the Saints, S. Teresa for instance, a slight glimpse of His brightness, with the result that in their eyes all which the earth holds beautiful appeared vile and mean. . . . What then shall it be when, face to face, we shall see Him as He is ! . . .

2°. Jesus Christ is a lover of us. . . . As light begets light, so love begets love. Now the central furnace of all love is the Sacred Heart of Jesus. From It radiates a love for each of us that immeasurably surpasses that of parents, brothers, sisters, and friends : *Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them unto the end.* . . . *As the Father hath loved me, I also have loved you.* John, xiii. 1 ; xv. 9. . . . *He loved me, and delivered himself for me.* Gal. ii. 20. . . . Would that I could know and realize the depth of His love for me ! . . . And the wonder is, not that He should love me so much, but that He should love me at all, poor and defiled that I am. His love for me is purely gratuitous, and even as such it is enhanced by the end he has in view, that I should love Him in return, and in loving Him enjoy bliss. . . .

3°. The Lord Jesus is the fountain of all good. What is good for the soul and what is good for the body, natural and supernatural, temporal and eternal good, everything, from the internal treasures of faith, hope, charity, humility and peace, down to our daily bread, comes from Christ and through Christ. From His plenitude we can draw, with just one condition : *If you shall ask me anything in my name, that I will do.* John, xiv. 14.

4°. The love of Jesus perfects the lover in wonderful manner. . . That pure and spiritual fire purifies and illumines the lover, and fills him with life and power. . . In particular the love of the Lord Jesus intimately unites us with him, and the Father : *We will come to him, and will make our abode with him.* John, xiv. 23. Love, by making us wholly spiritual, makes us like Jesus, the spiritual man : *He who is joined to the Lord, is one spirit.* 1 Cor. vi. 17. It makes us like Jesus the celestial man, adorned with humility, meekness, and all the virtues. It makes us like Jesus immolated and crucified. It makes us like Jesus risen, glorious and happy. . . The Lord Jesus is for every reason worthy of my love ; He is the true and proper object of my love ; the object at once corporal and spiritual, and, as such, alone capable of satisfying the craving of my human heart. . .

II. How can we offer Him due love ?

1°. From the heart : not in word and tongue, but in deed and truth ; not by mere passing affection, but by firm will, whereby we adhere to Him as our Lord, and highest good. All this is included in giving Him what He asks of us—our heart : *My son, give me thy heart.* Prov. xxiii. 26.

2°. Affectively and effectively, that is by internal acts, and external works. . . What are internal acts of love ? They are those we elicit by praying, particularly when we say the *Our Father*, and make an act of charity. . . External works of charity are in general those that pertain to the commandments of God, and our state of life, provided

we fulfil them out of love for God : *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.* John, xiv. 21. But special mention must be made of those works of charity which have to do with our neighbour : *This is my commandment, that you love one another.* John, xiv. 12.

3°. Jesus alone must be loved above all things, just as He alone must be adored. His altar and throne must be erected in the centre of the heart ; nor will He tolerate any idol of vicious or profane love to stand beside it.

4°. He must be loved in Himself and in His. . . In Himself : that is, in the Blessed Eucharist where He is corporally present ; in our hearts, where He is spiritually present ; in His divine will, which He manifests to us in the precepts He imposes, and the crosses He sends. . . He must be loved *in His* : that is, in His Spouse, holy mother the Church ; in good Christians, who are His brothers, sons, and members ; in His ministers, in the poor, in our neighbours all, and even in our enemies and those who persecute us.

5°. We ought to love God as He has loved us : by labouring, by suffering, and, if need be, by dying for Him. For such He has done for us : *Who for us men, and for our salvation, descended from heaven . . . was also crucified for us. . .*

6°. We should love as did the Saints, who in all things saw Christ, sought Christ, and served Christ. . .

7°. We should love Him as He wishes to be loved, namely, by fraternal charity : *If God hath so loved us, we also ought to love one another.* 1 John, iv. 11. . . *This is my commandment, that you love one another.* John, xiv. 12.

8°. We should love Him by imitating His example, both internal and external. A loving son, for instance, follows the example of his father, has regard for his wisdom, and adopts his ways. . .

9°. We should love him by consoling Him. The heart of our Divine Lord is afflicted by the sins and ingratitude of wicked men ; also by the tepidity and negligence of many of the faithful. It is the part of a friend to console, by fervour and the many ways known to love, the heart of his friend. . .

10°. We should love Him by seeking and promoting the glory of the Lord, which consists in spreading and fomenting knowledge and love of Him in the hearts of men: *I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I, but that it be kindled?* Luke, xii. 49. . . They who do so manifest towards Him not only fraternal, but maternal, love—*Stretching forth his hand towards his disciples, he said: Behold my mother and my brethren.* Matth. xii. 49. They were His brothers, because begotten of the same spirit; His mother, because they bore Him spiritually in their soul.

11°. The love of Jesus is impeded by inordinate love of creatures, by dissipation of spirit, and, needless to say, by sin. . .

12°. His love must be earnestly sought for in prayer, must be guarded by watchfulness, fomented by meditation, and strengthened by works of charity. . .

Conclusion. Let us then seek this great treasure with all zeal. Let us spare no labour, and no sacrifice that we may acquire it; for, having it, we possess Jesus, the fountain of all good. But where can we find that love? It is so precious a treasure that it can be found only in one place—His own most loving Heart. By prayer we can open that Heart, and, having opened, we shall find there what we seek—the love of Jesus.

THE PASSION OF CHRIST.

FIRST DISCOURSE.

GENERAL VIEW.

Christ suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow his steps.—1 Pet. ii. 21.

THE whole life of Christ should be a subject of deep study to a Christian; but in particular Christ's Passion should ever be before our eyes. In Christ, and in special manner in His passion, our whole religion centres and is contained. Hence S. Paul said: *I judged not myself to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ and him crucified.* 1 Cor. ii. 2. The Prophets foretold Christ, but it was principally Christ suffering; the Apostles preached Him, but it was chiefly Christ crucified. And it is thus Holy Mother the Church puts Him before the eyes of her children—for instance, the cross over every tabernacle. Thus too Christ daily manifests Himself, and in the Mass renews in bloodless manner the sacrifice of Calvary.

If we wish therefore to enter into the mind of the Church, and to know Christ, we must meditate deeply on the Passion. In this discourse we shall consider it under three headings:

I. Why should we meditate on the Passion?

II. Which are the chief points for consideration?

III. How in practice shall we meditate?

I. Why should we meditate on the Passion ?

1°. In the first place, from a motive of gratitude : because the Passion is the head and crown of Jesus' gifts to us ; and the price of our salvation. Would that we could realize all that is contained in the simple statement of S. Paul, *Christ died for us !* Rom. v. 9. . . S. Bernard says : *If I owe my entire self for my making, what shall I add for my re-making, and re-making in this way ?* (Tract on loving God, ch. v., n. 15).

2°. Because it is the will of Christ that we should preserve the memory of His Passion. This is evident from (1) the Blessed Eucharist, and Sacrifice of the Mass, instituted by Him as a living memorial of his death : *This is my body which shall be delivered for you : this do for the commemoration of me. . . As often as you shall eat this bread, and drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord, until he come.* 1 Cor. xi. 24, 26. . . It is evident (2) from the Gospel narrative, which, brief in regard to other matters, is full and explicit in dealing with the Passion. . .

3°. Because it is in accord with the mind and wish of the Church, which everywhere exhibits to the faithful the image of the Crucifixion. . .

4°. Because the Passion of the Lord is a striking compendium of the example of His whole life. . . Here in special way He is the light of the world—the light on the candlestick of the Cross, shining for all to see. . .

5°. Because the Passion contains the sum total, sublime and divine, of Christian wisdom : *I judged not myself to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified.* 1 Cor. ii. 2. . . This, says S. Bernard, *is my philosophy sublime, to know Jesus, and him crucified !* (Serm. 43 in Cant.)

6°. Christ suffering is a *book* of true wisdom, open to all, plain to all, both just and sinners ; a book that speaks of divine love, mercy, and justice ; a book that upbraids man with ingratitude, and convinces him of sin ; a book wherein we learn how to live and die—which has rightly come to be named the *book of the elect*.

7°. Christ suffering is the model to whom all who are to be saved must conform: *Whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be made conformable to the image of his Son.* Rom. viii. 29. . . *Always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus.* 2 Cor. iv. 10. . . And S. Paul, in referring to us as joint-heirs of Jesus Christ, says: *Yet so, if we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him.* Rom. viii. 17. See Gal. v. 24; 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12.

8°. Because it is the *tree of life* for both just and sinners. Nothing so withdraws one from sin and leads one to virtue. . .

9°. It is our strength and fortitude, stimulating our soul to will, and aiding it by grace to effect what it wills. . .

10°. Because all the Saints drew strength from the wounds of Jesus, and nourishment for their souls; wherefore the Passion has been named the food of Saints.

11°. By it are opened all the fountains of grace, of light, of strength, of consolation, and of mercy: *You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains.* Isaias, xii. 3. . . This was the spiritual or mystic rock from which the Israelites drank in the desert: *They drank of the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ.* 1 Cor. x. 4. . . *Because he struck the rock, and the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed.* Ps. lxxvii. 20. . . *He set them (his people) upon high land: that he might eat the fruits of the fields, that he might suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the hardest stone.* Deut. xxxii. 13.

II. Which are the chief points for consideration ?

1°. They are many and various; but in each scene of this drama of blood, we can ask: (1) What does Christ suffer? (2) What does He expiate? (3) What does He teach?

(1) What does He suffer in His soul,—in His body,—in His honour? . . . What does He suffer, if I consider all the circumstances that go to increase suffering? Who is He who endures such torture? By whom, and for whom, does He suffer?

(2) What does He expiate? Sin as a whole, not his, but ours. . . And sin in particular: sin of the tongue, sin of the eyes, etc.—just as His sufferings by analogy indicate.

(3) What does He teach both sinners and the just? . . What does He teach regarding Himself; what regarding me? . . What regarding heaven? What about earth? and what of hell? . . What of sin? What of virtue? . . What of the way of worldlings? . .

2°. On the one hand, what do sinful men do to Christ; on the other, what does Christ do for men? . . What, forsooth, do they do to Him in mind—by thought, intention, and heart's desire—what by their works? . .

3°. What is done now, and what shall be done in the future? that is, what of Christ now in the hands of the Jews (by whom I mean sinners), and what of them later, the scene being changed, in the hands of Christ the judge? . .

4°. Christ suffering is our victim, our model, our strength and fortitude; He is the price of the world, the spectacle of the world, its judgment and condemnation.

5°. How differently men regard Christ in His suffering, according as they are just, worldlings, sinners, or tepid Christians! How differently they will look upon Him later from how they regard Him now! Joseph in the vale of Sichern and Joseph afterwards in Egypt, is but a faint figure of Jesus on Calvary and Jesus in Jehosaphet: *Behold, he cometh with the clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they also that pierced him.* Apoc. i. 7.

III. How in practice shall we meditate on the Passion?

How: that is, what should be the order and method? ¹

1°. In narrative form: that is, the telling Gospel narrative should be adhered to; but moral reflections should be added.

¹ NOTE.—Notwithstanding the suggestions here offered, it should be remembered that the Passion is a subject in which individuality is likely to find expression; and the personal point of view is the best for each one.—TRANSLATOR.

The narrative might be given first, and next the reflections ; or the narrative could be interspersed with the reflections—such reflections as would spontaneously spring from the chief events in the narrative.

2°. As a guide to the narrative, we might consider : (1) the principle events or mysteries ; (2) the different scenes ; (3) the persons ; (4) and the instruments. A few words about each :

(1) The events or mysteries, such as : the agony and prayer in the garden, the treachery and betrayal of Judas, the trial before Annas and Caiphas, and the blow on the cheek, the accusations and Jesus' silence, the horrible treatment during the night, the denial of Peter, the condemnation in the house of Caiphas, the accusation in the pretorium of Pilate, the derision in the house of Herod, the choice between Jesus and Barabbas, the scourging, the crowning with thorns, the presentation to the Jews (*Ecce Homo*) from the loggia of Pilate's house, the pronouncing of the sentence, the carrying of the cross, the crucifixion, the agony on the cross, the seven words, the death on the cross.

(2) The order of the scenes (which will be determined by the persons and places), such as : the garden, the house of Caiphas, the pretorium of Pilate, the house of Herod, the lithostroton (the open tessellated place where capital sentence was pronounced), the hill of Calvary, the altar of the cross.

(3) The persons : Christ, the disciples, Judas, Peter, Caiphas and the leaders of the people, Pilate, Herod, the people, Simon Cyrene, the executioners, the two thieves, Mary and John standing by the cross.

(4) The instruments : the rope (round His neck), the scourge, the purple cloak, the reed, the crown of thorns, the lance, the nails, the cross, the inscription above the cross.

3°. As a guide to the moral reflections, we might consider : penance and detestation of sin ; prayer ; passions to be conquered—to be introduced in connection with the fall of Judas ; an unworthy communion—the kiss of Judas ; the occasion of sin—the fall of Peter ; human respect—the weak character of Pilate ; scandal—the action of the leaders in

inciting the people to crucify Jesus ; blasphemy and other sins of the tongue—the Jews spitting on Jesus' face ; pride and ambition—in connection with the mockery of Jesus ; avarice—the casting lots for His garments ; vanity and depraved thoughts—the crowning with thorns ; sensuality and luxury—the scourging ; the foolishness and malice of sin—Barabbas preferred to Jesus ; the duties of a Christian life—Jesus carrying the cross ; the future judgment—the tribunal of Caiphas ; hell—the words of Jesus to the sorrowing women ; heaven—His words to the penitent thief ; death—His dying on the cross. And so forth.

THE PASSION.—(*Continued*).

SECOND DISCOURSE.

THE CRUCIFIXION.

S. JOHN in the Apocalypse speaks of the tree of life which yielded its fruits every month, the leaves of which were for the healing of the nations ; Moses (Num. xxi.) erected in the desert a brazen serpent that those who had been bitten by fiery serpents might, by looking on it, be cured. In both types the Crucifixion is prefigured. That healing tree is the tree of the cross ; let us try to gather in its fruit and foliage by considering :

I. What did the crucified Jesus suffer ?

II. What did he expiate ?

III. What does he teach ?

I. What did Jesus suffer ?

1°. Looking at the cross about the sixth hour, what do we behold ? We behold a man hanging therefrom, from four great wounds, stripped of garments, stripped of all honour, abandoned by men, and, for the time being, forsaken by the Father ; a man against whom are levelled the shafts of hatred, barbarity and derision, treated with ingratitude by those for whom He is suffering, deserted by His disciples save one, and though His Mother stands by the cross, her presence but intensifies His agony of soul. . . .

2°. And by whom was He made to suffer all this ? Alas ! the Jews were not the only executioners ; they were but the instruments of that torture of which my sins were the principal cause. . .

II. What did He expiate ?

1°. Sin : He voluntarily made Himself a victim for love of us. We eat the forbidden fruit of the tree of sin ; He paid the penalty on the tree of suffering and expiation. . .

2°. He expiated my sin : *He loved me, and delivered himself for me.* Gal. ii. 20.

3°. He expiated my many and *various* sins : avarice,—by nakedness ; evil works,—by the wounds of His hands ; unholy steps towards the occasion of sin,—by the wounds of His feet ; my hatred and envy of my neighbour,—by the wound of His side ; my sins of eye and tongue,—by the torments of His thorn-crowned head. . .

III. What does He teach ?

The cross is at once both a *couch* and a *chair*—on it Christ dies ; from it Christ teaches (*non tantum est lectulus morientis, sed et cathedra docentis.* S. Bern.).

1°. He teaches by word, by silence, by His every wound, how much He loves me, my poor soul, my salvation. . .

2°. He teaches what sin is, in that it demanded such expiation : *Whom God hath proposed to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to the showing of his justice, for the remission of former sins.* Rom. iii. 25. . .

3°. He teaches how great is the mercy of God. . . He teaches all the virtues : patience, forgiveness of injuries, love of enemies, fortitude ; the labour, the grief, the contempt, that, if necessary, must be borne with constancy for justice sake ; how we are to sacrifice all things for the Lord, who has immolated Himself for us. . .

4°. He teaches us to seek and embrace those things that the world abhors. . . How different the divine teaching of the Cross from the teaching of the world ! . . Which is true ; which will I follow ?

5°. How do men receive this teaching of the Cross ? Do not most pass by shaking their head ? . . Yes, such is their attitude towards the calvary of this world. . . For all that, Christ remains, and says : *O all you who pass by the way, attend and see.* . . Lament. i. 12.

6°. Yes I will attend and see. Christ the innocent suffers ; what of me a sinner ? Christ suffers for me ; what do I do for Him ? He does not complain, His words are words of kindness and love ; how do I act ? He prays for His enemies ; how am I disposed towards mine ? He humiliated Himself, and became obedient unto death ; how does my life compare with His ? He persevered unto death that was holy and precious ; what in point of constancy is my life ?

Do we wish to imitate Him ? *Let us go forth therefore to him without the camp, bearing his reproach.* Hebr. xiii. 13—without the camp of sin and worldliness, unto the Calvary of penance and mortification.

SPECIAL HEADINGS.

The mystery of the Cross can be treated historically thus :
 I. How is Christ nailed to the cross ?—II. How does He suffer on the cross ?—III. How does He die on the cross ?—Under each of these points there might be a narration and description of the circumstances related in the Gospel ; after which might come the enquiry, why did Christ the eternal Wisdom wish to suffer all this ? R. That He might expiate and teach ; that I might imitate Him. . .

I. Christ suffered in soul, in body, and in fame : how should we suffer ? . . Man complains when he has to suffer ; but at sight of Jesus' patience all repining should be silenced in the breast of a Christian. . . II. Good Christians suffer ; but they suffer less than others, for they suffer with consolation, with merit and with glory. . . III. The wicked also suffer ; but they suffer more and longer, without merit, without glory, without consolation. . .

The threefold crucifixion : in soul, in fame, and in body. . .

I. Christ suffered intensely in soul, because 1° as God He foresaw all His torments ; 2° because He who so abhorred sin saw Himself loaded with the sins of the world, and, in the words of the Apostle, for us made a curse ; 3° because He foresaw the many souls who through their own fault would perish, and render His Passion useless ; 4° love is the principle and measure of grief : now Christ loved His Father, whom He saw offended ; He loved man, whom He saw so miserable ; He loved Himself, whom He saw overwhelmed with such grief and torments—hence *great as the sea was his destruction*. See Lament. ii. 13. . . II. He suffered in fame : 1° no fame was ever so great ; and yet none so belittled and trampled on ;—2° none so deeply rooted in wisdom and miracles ; and yet none so completely torn up. . . III. He suffered in body :—1° in the scourging, particularly for the extraordinary perfection and delicacy of His body ; for the fury of His executioners ; the number of lashes ; and that awful instrument of punishment, the Roman scourge ; 2° in the crowning with thorns, for the tenderness of His head, the number, size and sharpness of the thorns, and the cruelty with which the executioners pressed them down ;—3° in the cruel stripping of His garments, three times repeated ;—4° in the carrying of the cross, for its weight, the distance, the steep of Calvary, and His utter exhaustion ;—5° in the nailing thereto, and the hanging therefrom for three hours until death released Him. . .

The necessity of suffering with Christ. . . I. It is necessary, and, in a manner, essential that man should suffer in this life—what water is to a fish, that suffering is to man, his natural element here below :—1° because the earth was cursed. Gen. iii. 17 ;—2° because here we are in exile, not in our native country ;—3° because life is a sojourning, an exile, a prison, a vale of tears. . . II. And even if suffering were not necessary as a natural condition of life, it would still be obligatory ; for Christ had to suffer, therefore, the disciple, who is not above his master, has to suffer too, and, through suffering and many tribulations, thus enter into the kingdom of God. . . Moreover, man the sinner has to face the consequence of his sin—suffering.

THE PASSION.—(*Continued*).

THIRD DISCOURSE.

COMPENDIUM OF THE PASSION, THROUGH ITS VARIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES : WITH MORAL REFLECTIONS.

I. The Lord leaves the Supper-room for the Garden.

WHY? That He might pray as was His custom at night. And what though the hour was late (being then past nine o'clock), though He was fatigued from preaching, though danger awaited Him there from the traitor, who knew the place, He was not to be prevented by any or all these things from communing with His Father; because 1° there was question of the will of His Father: *That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath given me commandment, so do I: arise let us go hence.* John, xiv. 31.

2°. And inasmuch as the struggle was close at hand, He devoted Himself the more to prayer, that thus He might arm Himself. . .

II. In the Garden, Christ, the second Adam, begins His Passion.

Why in the garden? 1°. Because in the garden the first Adam sinned; and 2° because we sin in the garden of pleasure. It was therefore meet that Christ should expiate sin in the garden of sorrow. . . He who wishes to be saved must not look on life as a garden of pleasure, but as the exile of expiation. . . He who wishes to have paradise on earth cannot have it in heaven. . . He who wishes to be merry with the devil cannot rejoice with Christ. 3°. The garden of the Passion is the garden of olives—the olive, by reason of the

oil it contains, being the symbol of the *light* and *consolation* that are found in meditating on the Passion. . .

III. He is sad.

1°. How bitter His agony of soul, we can judge from four considerations : (1) He told His disciples so : *My soul is sorrowful even unto death*—that is, His sorrow was such as is felt only in death, or such that it would have caused death had He not preserved Himself to suffer more ; (2) He was deprived of all human consolation, because His disciples, who might console Him, were asleep ; (3) He sweated a bloody sweat ; (4) it was necessary for an angel to come from heaven to comfort Him.

2°. The *causes* of this sorrow were : (1) the sight of His Passion ; (2) the ingratitude of those who caused His suffering ; (3) the greater ingratitude of many of those for whom He was about to suffer, of whom He could not say, as He said of His executioners, *they know not what they do* ; (4) the *bitterness* of His Passion combined with the fact of its *uselessness* to many, whom, on account of it, He would be compelled later to judge more severely ; (5) the thought of the sins of the whole world, and of each one of us, as also the eternal punishment of so many. . .

3°. The *motive* or *end* of His sorrow : (1) that He might expiate for our impenitence ; (2) that He might make atonement for the vain and wicked joys of the world ; (3) that He might give an example of contrition ; (4) that He might give an example of patience in affliction ; (5) that He might bring consolation to the afflicted ; (6) and, we might add, because He then bore not only His own sorrows but those of His Church—the falling away of various countries from the faith, and the scandals by which many would be slain.

IV. As witnesses of His agony He takes Peter, James and John.

1°. Why does He take witnesses ? That His grief may become known to us. 2°. Why the three witnesses who were

with Him on Thabor? (1) That they may be the less scandalized, and may continue brave in affliction; (2) that they may know how much He loves men, who, for their sake, changes such glory into such humiliation; (3) that the sorrows and consolations which He sends us may be received with equal gratitude. . .

V. How does He act in sorrow?

1°. He prays. 2°. He perseveres in prayer. 3°. Being in agony He prays longer. 4°. He accepts the will of His Father. 5°. He does not forget the Apostles committed to His care, and treats them with all meekness and patience. . All that He might teach us how to act in afflictions. . .

VI. How does He pray?

1°. With recollected mind; *He retires*, for prayer loves secrecy. 2°. He prays with reverence and humility: *He fell upon his face*. 3°. He prays with confident love: *My Father*. 4°. He prays with resignation: *Not as I will*. 5°. Perseveringly: *Can you not watch one hour with me?* . . And repeats the same prayer to His Father—that we might learn to pray, and conform ourselves to the divine will. . .

VII. He speaks to His disciples.

To the eight whom He left in Gethsemani He said: *Sit you here, while I pray*. And having taken Peter, James and John with Him, He said: *Stay you here and watch*. . . *Can you not watch one hour with me? Watch and pray that you enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*. . . 1°. *Sit you here, till I go yonder*: He gives rest to others; but imposes labour on Himself. 2°. *Watch and pray with me*: He exhorts them, and sets them an example. 3°. *Watch and pray*: the two are necessary

to guard against falling. . . Although the spirit is well disposed, and the will upright, the flesh, nevertheless, is weak, and must be strengthened by prayer. 4°. *Were you not able?* He reproves them in a spirit of meekness. 5°. They fall even after the admonition; still He bears with them. . . From this learn, O parents, how to correct your children, and those under you. . .

VIII. Still the Disciples sleep.

A sad example of sloth: 1°. They sleep after His admonitions and example; 2° they sleep in such danger; 3° accordingly all fled, and Peter fell miserably—does not similar sloth take possession of me? 4°. On the other hand, with what strength the Lord arose from prayer!

IX. Having prayed three times He addresses them.

Sleep ye now and take your rest; behold the hour is at hand, and the Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise let us go: behold he is at hand that will betray me. Matth. xxvi. 45, 46. 1°. As much as to say: You are still sleeping in this very hour of greatest peril! . . . And so with you, O sinner, you still sleep while death is at hand. . . 2°. Behold Judas is not sleeping: sinners are always alert when there is question of offending God. . . 3°. *Arise.* . . The words also apply to us; we must arise, for, behold the enemy, behold the struggle is about to begin. . . Are you prepared? . . . Christ was prepared through prayer; but the disciples were not. . . How many since then, and even now, have been found unprepared in the face of pressing danger! . . .

X. Judas came at the head of a great multitude and kissed Jesus.

Let us consider: 1° the crime of the traitor; 2° how he came to such depth of infamy; 3° the awful consequences; 4° how Jesus received him.

1°. The crime : (1) he went over to the enemies of Christ ; (2) he became their leader ; (3) he betrayed the Lord into their hands. . . Behold herein a type of the unfaithful Christian, the would-be disciple of Christ ! In particular, behold the hypocrite—the man of the sacrilegious confession and the sacrilegious communion.

2°. How came Judas to this ? The beginning of his fall was *passion not mortified*. Judas was chosen, and sanctified and destined for the glory of apostleship, just as Peter was. But while hearing Christ's words, and seeing His example, he neglected to curb his passion. Yielding to theft, he gradually went from what was little to what was great. Later, conscience was put aside, and he saw only with the eye of theft, and cared only for what fed his passion ; hence his words in regard to the precious ointment of Mary Magdalen : *To what purpose is this waste ?* . . He became more obdurate ; his one desire was to gratify his passion in every way, and for that he did not hesitate to betray his Master. Dead alike to the words, the threats, and the humility of Jesus, he sealed His hardness of heart with a bad communion, and then—we know the rest. Brethren, let us beware and mortify our passions ; it is an awful thing to be so near Jesus, for the very danger of becoming a Judas.

3°. The consequences. He got what he bargained for, did he thus feel satisfied ? No, the devil deceived him, and drew him to his fall. At first he concealed from him the magnitude of his crime. Then he showed it to him in all its horror, and hid from him the mercy of God, that he might cast him into despair. . . The miserable man to be sure felt sorry, but it was not sorrow of the right kind. . . The Jews despised him ; and at last he who could have died a glorious martyr for Christ, instead died in the horror of despair a victim to the wiles of the devil. . . Behold the fruits of sin ; behold the effect of sorrow that is rooted in despair. . .

4°. How did Jesus receive him ? (1) Without rebuke, and without anger : *Friend, whereto art thou come ?* (2) Even with sweet and loving correction : *Judas, dost thou betray the*

Son of man with a kiss? And why thus? In order to expiate our sacrileges, our infidelities, and the ingratitude of children towards parents; to make atonement for our hatred, and our biting words; and in order to teach us meekness in the midst of injuries, and love of our enemies.

XI. Whom do you seek?

Jesus of Nazareth: they seek Him, not to listen to Him, but to seize Him. Thus do the persecutors of the Church act; thus do sinners. . . O Lord, I will seek thee in truth and in the sincerity of my heart; I will seek thee with love as my good above every good. . .

XII. I am he.

I am he: This voice, so sweet to His disciples, is terrible to His enemies. *I am he* rings in every ear, and whispers in every conscience. It is heard in life; it will be heard at death it will be heard in Jehosapheth. . .

XIII. They fell to the ground.

1°. He shows His power, that it may be clear that He willingly lays down His life for us. 2°. He prostrates sinners that they may know their guilt: He does so by sickness, by humiliations, through the death of friends, and by the internal stirrings of grace. . . 3°. They remain obdurate. . . Will I too harden my heart? . . If that sweet voice of Jesus now prostrates them while they are on earth, what shall it be when in judgment He whom they blasphemed and spat upon, shall come in the clouds, and say, *I am he*? . . 4°. Rising they again asked Him, and He replied: *Jesus of Nazareth*. . . Behold perseverance in sin, the abuse of grace, and the scorning of the admonitions of God. . .

XIV. If therefore you seek me, let these go their way.

See how Jesus looks to His followers, while He offers Himself to be sacrificed: thus He teaches us to exercise a generous charity.

XV. Peter cuts off the ear of Malchus.

The zeal of Peter is not in accordance with wisdom. . . . He slept instead of praying; hence his present rashness, instead of asking his Master and acting on His advice. . . .

XVI. Christ restrains Peter.

1°. The gentle Lamb does not wish to resist with the sword, but with patience: *In your patience you shall possess your souls.* Luke, xxi. 19. . . . *The patient man is better than the valiant.* Prov. xvi. 32. . . . What are the arms of Christ? 2°. He quotes the law for Peter, to show that He strictly observes it, although not bound by it. . . . 3°. *The chalice which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink of it?* In all things He looks to the will of His Father, nor does He regard His enemies, except so far as they are the instruments which His Father uses to offer Him the chalice. . . . 4°. *Thinkest thou that I cannot ask my Father, and he will give me presently more than twelve legions of Angels.* As much as to say: power is not wanting to me; but the will of my Father must come before all other considerations. . . . *I could ask:* in this behold the power of prayer. . . . Why do the just suffer? Is it that God could not assist them? Could He not send them more than twelve legions of Angels? . . . They suffer, as did Christ, for the glory of God, and for their own greater advantage. . . . Nor should they fear evil, as God is with them: *If God be for us, who is against us?* Rom. viii. 31. . . . In the words of Eliseus: *There are more with us than with them.* 4 Kings, vi. 16. . . . The three children, addressing King Nabuchodonosor, said: *Behold our God, whom we worship, is able to save us . . . but if he will not,*

be it known to thee, O King, that we will not worship thy gods, nor adore the golden statue which thou hast set up. Dan. iii. 17, 18.

XVII. He heals the ear of Malchus.

1°. He thus renders good for evil. 2°. By this miracle He still invites His enemies to return to reason. 3°. But they remain obdurate. 4°. The healing of the ear typifies listening to the dictates of faith and obedience ; which the devil tries to destroy, but which Christ restores, that we may hearken to His word, and may say with the Psalmist : *I will hear what the Lord will speak in me.* Ps. lxxxiv. 9.

XVIII. Ye come out as it were against a thief.

And He adds : *When I was daily with you in the temple, you did not stretch forth your hands against me.* Matth. xxvi. *But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.* Luke, xxii. . . .
1°. He shows them the awfulness of their crime, and their ingratitude, since they thus repay Him for His teaching of salvation. Does He not say the same to all sinners ? . . .
2°. At the same time He indicates that it is only by the permission of God such power is given them. . . . 3°. *Now is your hour and the power of darkness.* In like manner, the present is the hour for all sinners ; life is a brief hour, and for them it is the hour of night. But the forbearance of God is transitory ; by and bye it will be changed into vengeance. . . .
The power of darkness, that is, of hell, of lying, of error, of hypocrisy, of the secrecy of sin—all which are typified by darkness. But soon there will come the torch of death, and the all-seeing eye of God ; and then what is hidden shall be revealed. . . .

XIX. They took Jesus and bound him.

1°. They cruelly bound the hands that had done so much good. 2°. Jesus could have burst those bonds more thoroughly than Samson burst his, but He wished to bear them. Why ?

(1) In order to break our terrible bonds of sin ; (2) to establish us in the liberty of the sons of God ; (3) that, thus moved by His love, we might not any more break His sweet bond and yoke, through love of false liberty ; (4) that we might bear His bonds, the bonds of law, of obedience, the golden bonds of true liberty. . .

XX. Then his disciples leaving him, all fled away.

1°. On the part of His disciples, what weakness ! they who had seen so many miracles, they who had just left the Eucharistic table ; they whose feet He had washed—they not only desert Him, but are shaken in faith by the first shock of adversity. . . Many are the friends at one's table, where are they in the hour of need ? . . No wonder Christ said : *Watch and pray.* . .

2°. On the part of our Blessed Lord, what affliction ! *Thou hast put away my acquaintance from me ; they have set me an abomination to themselves.* Ps. lxxxvii. 9.

XXI. But they holding Jesus led him.

Why ? 1°. For me who went astray, like a sheep that has perished.

2°. How different this entry to Jerusalem from that which took place when they strew His way with palm-branches ! . . Behold herein the instability and changeableness of human friendship. . . How different is the friendship of God ! . .

XXII. He is led to the tribunals.

Why ? 1°. That He might be publicly slain, with a view to greater ignominy. . . 2°. That He might be judged by His creatures, and before various tribunals, for His greater humiliation, and the greater showing forth of His virtues. . .

3°. That His innocence, and the iniquity of His enemies may be the more apparent. . . 4°. That He might expiate the iniquity of men, who with such ease unjustly judge their

neighbour : *Judge not, and you shall not be judged.* Matth. vii. 1. . . 5°. That we might find grace before the tribunal of God. . . 6°. That we may not fear the world's tribunal, and that, whilst we are judged by this world's tribunal, we may nevertheless remain constant. . .

XXIII. They led him to Annas first, then to Caiphas the high-priest, where the Scribes and Pharisees had assembled to condemn him.

1°. *The gentiles raged, and the princes met together against the Lord.* . . That council is an image of evil company, which is to be avoided. . . *He that dwelleth in heaven will laugh at them.* . . 2°. The proud, abusing their talents, and carried away by hatred, do not pause at crime. . . 3°. The world sits in judgment now ; but to-morrow itself will be judged. . . 4°. Would that we would judge ourselves, for thus shall we escape judgment ! . .

XXIV. Annas questioned him regarding his disciples and his teaching.

1°. He did so not with an upright but a perverse mind with a view to condemning him. . . In like manner the impious enquire about religion and its ministers only with a view to condemning. . . Others read only what is written against religion.

2°. In this Christ also wishes to make atonement for the many who neglect to know their religion and the example of the Saints. . .

XXV. I have spoken openly to the world . . Ask them who have heard.

1°. Here was a reply full of strength and wisdom. 2°. And the same applies to His teaching at the present day ; it is known to the world, and the excuse of ignorance will be of no avail. 3°. The doctors and teachers of the Church can be interrogated regarding it. 4°. He was asked regarding His

doctrine and His disciples ; but, having nothing laudable to say of the latter, He remained silent. . .

**XXVI. One of the servants gave Jesus a blow, saying :
Answerest thou the high-priest so ?**

1°. The Eternal Son of God struck on the face ! What an awful thought ! What will that man think when he sees Jesus coming in the clouds of heaven ? 2°. Yet this is what the sinner does—*sinner, thou art that man.* . . 3°. In particular that blow represents the injury inflicted on the Church, and its ministers ; as also the insult offered to God by the profanation of His feasts, and by irreverence in His house. . . 4°. It symbolises also the culpable servility of human respect, which, like that miserable servant of the high-priest, in order to please men, offends God. . . 5°. What man would resignedly submit to such an indignity ? If the slightest offence be offered to me, or even the shadow of injury, how bitterly I complain ! But let us see how eternal Wisdom acted :—

**XXVII. If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil ; but
if well, why strikest thou me ?**

1°. What a wise and calm reply to such an injury ! . . Why, we ask, does He here speak, and not remain silent, as He did later ? (1) That He might give us an example of how to speak, as He gave us an example of how to be silent ; (2) lest He might appear to be wanting in reverence towards the high-priest. . . 2°. The impious and sinners all can be caught between the horns of this dilemma (based on His words) : *If the Gospel is evil, give testimony of the evil ; if good and from God, why trample it under foot ?* Behold, in all the centuries, not one particle of testimony have adversaries been able to produce against the Gospel, and yet they revile it. . . 3°. Would that we on all occasions spoke wisely, for thus adversaries would be baffled by the depth and moderation of our words !

XXVIII. And their witnesses did not agree.

1°. Evil desire always seeks specious or vain pretexts, in order to avoid the carplings of conscience ; but in vain. . .

2°. Every word and act of Christ was turned into a crime ; that He might expiate the rash judgments which we pronounce on the words and acts of our neighbour. . . 3°. The false witnesses represent the various heresies which, though opposed to each other in turn, have this in common, to accuse and condemn the Church of Christ. . .

XXIX. Jesus was silent.

Why? 1°. Not that He could not reply. . . 2°. But that He might expiate our many sins of the tongue. . . 3°. Also in order to emphasize the virtue of silence. . . 4°. Later He will reply, that He might teach us when to be silent, and when to speak. 5°. That He might teach us to leave our defence to God, especially when men are unwilling to hear it. . .

XXX. I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us if thou be the Christ.

He introduces the name of God, that he might secure his evil purpose : thus the impious abuse religion itself to accomplish their end ; thus too hypocrites have the name of God in their mouth, and crime in their heart. . .

XXXI. Thou hast said it. Nevertheless I say to you : hereafter you shall see. . .

1°. The name of God having been used, He, for reverence towards it, breaks silence ; as also because this was a judicial interrogation regarding Faith, which, for that reason, it was necessary to confess openly. . . 2°. Also He teaches us to obey those who speak in the name of God, although otherwise they may be unworthy ; how much more, those who are true to their calling ! . . 3°. *I am the Christ* . . whom

you have not known, clearly manifest, although appearing in meek and humble form ; but understand that, after a short time, you shall see Him coming in majesty. . . Then—and this should be a consolation to His followers—just judgment shall succeed iniquity. . .

XXXII. He is guilty of death.

Who ? Sanctity itself : behold the equity of the world ! Who ? Not thou, O Lord, but I—I am guilty of death, nay even of eternal death. . . And yet I dare to complain when thou dost send me a little pain. . .

XXXIII. He is mocked during the night.

1°. What contumelies they heap upon Him ! They spit on His face ; they pluck His hair and beard—all which *Isaias* saw in prophecy when he said : *I have given my cheeks to them that plucked them* (l. 6) ; they blindfold His eyes, and strike Him, saying : *Prophecy, who is it that struck thee ?* . .

2°. Why all this suffering and humiliation ? (1) That He might expiate for the sins committed under the shadow of night ; (2) that He might make atonement in particular for blasphemies, calumnies, evil words and thoughts against God and our neighbour, as also for impure and unbecoming words, which latter are more hateful to Christ than the spittle that besmeared His face. . . (3) In a word, that He might make expiation for all sins, especially those which, by analogy, are suggested by the various forms of ill-treatment.—Thus : the blows designate the sins committed by hand ; the clenched fist the closing of the heart of the avaricious against the poor ; the open palm the sinful waste of the prodigal who thinks only of his ambition, his pleasure, his vices ; the plucking of Christ's beard and hair, and the spitting on His face, contempt for authority ; the veiling His face, concealment of sin in confession ; the mock appeal (implying that He did not know) *Prophecy who is it that struck thee*, suggests the foolishness of those who act as if Christ does

not see, who think that *the clouds are his covert*, and that *he doth not consider our things* (Job, xxii. 14), as also those who, because God does not punish immediately, become on that account more bold in sinning, as if there is no end to the measure of His patience—*God is not mocked*. Gal. vi. 7.

XXXIV. Peter denies Him thrice.

Peter at the voice of a maid denies His Lord three times ; he falls deeper and deeper, until, touched by a glance from Christ, he went forth and wept bitterly. . . By this we are taught : (1) how great is the weakness of a man who does not pray (it will be recalled that Peter was sleeping when he should have been praying) ; how we should avoid the occasion of evil and intercourse with the wicked ; how we should sincerely repent ; and, above all, we are taught how great is the kindness and mercy of our Blessed Lord. . .

XXXV. They accuse him : He subverts our nation, He prohibits tribute to be paid to Caesar ; He says He is a King.

1°. Let us reflect how ignominious was that journey to Pilate (a rope round His neck, the penalty of those who were given over from the Sanhedrim to the civil power).

2°. What false charges are alleged ! Nevertheless, of these same the Lord said : *Whatever they shall say to you, observe and do ; render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's*. . . And, on the other hand, when they wished to have Him made king, He fled from them.

3°. Behold the open accusations, and these are believed and repeated by the people. Moral : lend not your ear to calumny. . . Another moral : so live that only what is false can be urged against you.

4°. No one defended Christ . . because few are found to defend the truth, justice, the poor and needy ; but the Lord in due time will vindicate them : *I know that the Lord will do justice to the needy, and will revenge the poor*. Ps. cxxxix. 13.

XXXVI. Pilate hearing the last accusation, interrogated Christ saying : Art thou a King ? The Lord confessed he was a king, but not of this world.

1°. Christ is truly a king, the king of the human race, whom many now ignore and condemn, but whom all shall later be forced to recognise, on the day of judgment, when *in the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth.*

2°. *His kingdom*, He says, *is not of this world.* (1) Not of this world, but *in* this world ; for His kingdom is the Church, the kingdom of faith, of grace, of glory ; (2) *not of this world*, that is, it had not its origin here, but in heaven, nor, like the kingdom of the Caesars, is it *temporal*, leading through temporal means to a temporal end ; He had indeed a right to a kingdom of this kind, but did not wish to exercise that right. The kingdom of the Lord is *spiritual*, namely, the Church, founded by Him for a spiritual and eternal end ; to attain which is the duty of all, by using primarily spiritual means, and secondarily those that are temporal. . .

3°. This is a true kingdom, possessing true power, true glory, and true riches, which each one can acquire. . .

4°. Of this kingdom we Christians have begun to be participators, and by and by we shall be fully so, it being the kingdom of grace here, and the kingdom of glory hereafter. . . We are not called to enjoy things temporal, nor are we called to corruptible crowns and riches ; these at best are only means by which we can attain to the *incorruptible crown of glory*. We should all be prepared to say with Christ : *My kingdom is not of this world.* . . But we cannot attain to the kingdom of glory in heaven except through the kingdom of grace on earth ; which consists in this, that we obey the law of Christ, our eternal king, and not the law of the usurper and tyrant, the devil. . . Wherefore, in order that Christ may reign in us, the tyrant must be driven out—the devil, sin, concupiscence of riches and so forth ; the throne of Christ must be erected in our heart, that He alone may rule there, and that, under His gentle dominion, we may aspire to riches

and eternal good things. And this is the kingdom we seek, when we pray—*Thy kingdom come*; this kingdom we are ordered to seek: *Seek first the kingdom of God, and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you.* Matth. vi. 33.

5°. But how many Christians there are who, while saying with their lips, *thy kingdom come*, pray in their heart to the devil, to sin, to the world, that their, not God's, kingdom may come! And it does come—but how miserable and despicable!

XXXVII. Jesus is sent to Herod, clad in a white garment.

1°. The hall of Herod represents the world, with its splendour, its voluptuousness, its pride. In this hall, Christ, who so often kindly addressed the poor and the little ones, uttered not a word. . . Moral: he who loves the world cannot expect to hear the words of eternal Wisdom.

2°. Worldlings, on the other hand, deride supreme wisdom as folly: *We considered their life foolishness*; but a little time and they will say: *We fools.* . .

3°. Our Blessed Lord was clad by way of derision in the white garment that was used by the Caesars, and, as a fool, was led through the streets, while the people all poured ridicule on Him. Why? (1) To make atonement for *human respect*, which, because of the vain fear of derision, is afraid to manifest virtue; (2) to expiate the ridicule and contempt with which the wicked persecute piety; (3) that we may learn to bear contumely with even mind. . . Happy we if the white robe of innocence be the occasion of opprobrium to us! . .

XXXVIII. Herod and Pilate became friends.

1°. The compliment of Pilate to Herod, in sending Jesus as a subject, had the effect of reconciling them.

2°. In like manner, heretics, schismatics, the wicked, and those divided amongst themselves, join hands in persecuting and calumniating the Church: *The princes came together against the Lord.* . . *But he who dwells in the heavens shall laugh at them.* . .

XXXIX. Pilate acknowledged Jesus' innocence, yet did not release Him.

What weakness of mind and character ! Here was a man fluctuating between his conscience and temporal interest. . . He tries to serve two masters. Result : he lost all, the favour of God, the favour of the Jews, and the favour of Caesar. On the following year the people rose against him, and accused him to Caesar. Tiberius summoned him to Rome, and then sent him as an exile into Gaul, where the miserable man, two years later, died by his own hand. . .

XL. Barabbas is preferred to Jesus.

1°. Considered in all its circumstances what a humiliation for the Eternal Son of God !

2°. This was the price He had to pay, to expiate our ambition, our envy, our pride. . . How hurt we feel, and how we complain if we are ever so slightly forgotten, or if others are put before us ! . .

3°. Thus is expiated also the iniquity of the sinner, who prefers vice to virtue, who puts the devil before God. . . *Not this man, but Barabbas*—this is ever the cry of passion. . . Let us change that cry and say : *For us not Barabbas, but Jesus ; let the old man of sin be crucified, that Jesus may live and reign in our hearts.* . .

XLI. He is scourged.

1°. What iniquity and cruelty ! What patience of the immaculate and torn Lamb !

2°. He thus expiates sensuality and the sins of flesh. . .

3°. He teaches us patience, that we sinners may bear the scourges of affliction.

4°. This cruelty He suffers that He may wrest the unchaste from the more terrible punishment of hell.

5°. He receives no consolation from either His disciples or friends, that He might expiate the lack of charity and compassion towards one's neighbour. . .

XLII. Behold the man ! . . Behold your King !

1°. Behold the man ! Behold to what condition sin has reduced Him !

2°. Behold what His love for you has brought Him to !

3°. Behold the *true man*, the beloved of the Father, in whom the Father was well pleased—extrinsically, abject and miserable, but intrinsically, beautiful in form beyond the sons of men. . .

4°. Behold the man, the exemplar of men, to whom we must conform if we would become sons of God. . .

5°. Behold the man, the King of men, whom some receive, and some reject. . . But whom all shall one day recognise. Behold the King whom all must serve willingly or unwillingly, either now or hereafter. . .

XLIII. We have no king but Caesar.

1°. Harken to the cry of the rebellious Jews, who are unwilling to serve Christ their true and legitimate King, who led them out of the land of Egypt, whom only a few days previously they recognised, crying : *Blessed be the King who cometh in the name of the Lord.* Luke, xix. 38. *Hosanna to the son of David, hosanna in the highest.* Matth. xxi. 9. . . Now they have no King except a pagan ruler. . .

2°. In like manner, the Christian, redeemed by the blood of Christ, incorporated by Baptism into His kingdom, and having solemnly promised to renounce Satan and to adhere to Christ, falls through sin into the slavery of a hostile tyrant. . . As Pilate showed Jesus to the Jews, so conscience and the Gospel show Him to us, saying : *Behold your king !* Behold His law ! But sinners respond : We have no king but the devil, no king but money and lucre, no king but pleasure, no king but the unbridled desires of our heart. . .

3°. But will that tyrant king be able to save them in the evil day ? Ah ! then they shall be forced to recognise who is king indeed ; the king who will say to them : *Depart from me, ye accursed.* . .

XLIV. If thou release this man, thou art not Caesar's friend.

1°. Behold the world's great temptation, *human respect*: if you live well, if you are just, and so forth, you are not the friend of such and such a one. . . Who is this Caesar who appears on every side? Am I going to offend God to please him? If so, is it not like making a king take a place below his groom?

2°. *Whosoever will be a friend of this world, becometh an enemy of God.* James, iv. 4.

XLV. I am innocent of the blood of this just man.

1°. Pilate washed his hands *before the people*, as if this would suffice *before God*. . . So too, whoever seeks only the vain semblance of virtue, contenting himself with saving appearances, will find himself empty before God, who looks to the heart. . . For instance, he who goes through the ceremony of confession without sincere repentance, deceives not God, but himself—like Pilate, he washes his hands before the people, but they are still stained with the blood of his guilt. . .

XLVI. His blood be upon us.

Terrible cry! terrible self-imprecation!

1°. And yet this is what the sinner says; he lightly takes on himself the awful consequences of his sin, as if vengeance was never to overtake him.

2°. He pronounces his own sentence; I know, he says, that I am sinning mortally; I know I am deserving hell; I know that my sin will one day overtake me—but let it come, be it and its consequences on my head!

3°. It is a terrible thing to be guilty of the Blood of God, which happens in the case of every sin, but particularly in case of sacrilege: *Whosoever eateth this bread, or drinketh the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself.* 1 Cor. xi. 27, 29.

4°. This judgment overtakes sinners even in this life ; and it can be seen that it has come upon the Jews. But if not here in fulness, certainly in hell it shall fall upon them. *Because they have forsaken me, and have sacrificed to strange gods, to provoke me to wrath with all the works of their hands, therefore my wrath shall fall upon this place, and shall not be quenched.* 2 Paralip. xxxiv. 25.

XLVII. Bearing his own cross, he went forth.

1°. How the gentle Saviour receives the cross as coming from the hand of His Father ! He does not complain ; but He embraces and carries it. . . .

2°. It is necessary that we all carry our cross after our Master : *Whosoever doth not carry his cross after me, cannot be my disciple.* Luke, xiv. 27.

3°. What is our cross ? . . .

4°. How should we bear it ? Patiently, joyfully, daily, in conformity with our Lord. . . . *He said to all : If any one wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me.*

5°. In the cross is salvation ; in the cross is life ; in the cross is protection from enemies ; in the cross is infusion of heavenly sweetness ; in the cross is strength of mind ; in the cross is joy of spirit ; in the cross is the height of virtue ; in the cross is the perfection of sanctity. A Kemp. ii. 12.

XLVIII. Simon of Cyrene helps Him to carry the cross.

1°. He succumbs while satisfying for my many falls. . . .

2°. Not losing heart He struggles on for us, even to the exhaustion of His bodily power ; by which He teaches us that we in turn should not spare ourselves in His service.

3°. He is assisted : if we willingly shoulder our cross, we shall be assisted too—Jesus will do so.

4°. He is not assisted by the Jews, nor by the soldiers, nor by the disciples, for these latter were not present, or did not dare to appear. . . . At the present day there are many

who decline to carry the cross, they are: (1) unbelievers, who do not recognise Him; (2) worldlings and the ambitious, who think it unbecoming or beneath them; (3) those given to sensuality, because carrying the cross is disagreeable to the flesh. . . . S. Paul, grieving, said that *many are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame.* Phil. iii. 19.

5°. He is assisted by the Cyrene whose name was Simon, which means the *obedient* one, who was a stranger coming to Jerusalem. . . . His labour was short; but what a happy memory of it must have remained to him!

6°. And we can help Jesus in carrying His cross: (1) provided we carry our own; (2) provided we help our neighbour in affliction. . . .

7°. And this we should do, not under compulsion, but freely, for and with Jesus,—whose *yoke is sweet, and whose burden is light.* Matth. xi. 30. . . . And carrying the cross is easy, for *the Lord putteth his hand under it.* See Ps. xxxvi. 24.

XLIX. A great multitude followed.

1°. Some that they might fix Him to the cross; some that they might gloat over the spectacle, of whom were His enemies the Pharisees and others; some out of curiosity; some, moved by compassion; no one for the purpose of assisting or mourning with Him. . . .

2°. There followed also the Mother of Jesus, and His beloved disciple, and certain holy women, who in their hearts participated in His sorrows. . . . So too at the present day, a few follow His bloodstained footsteps; and these few are most dear to the Lord. . . .

L. His face (as tradition has it) was wiped with a towel.

1°. Blessed was the woman Veronica, (or Seraphia), to whom the Lord gave this consolation. 2°. She is rewarded, for, while receiving on her towel the impress of His face,

she likewise received it in her heart. . . 3°. To us is granted the same privilege, to condole with Christ in the person of His sick and poor. . . 4°. And Veronica's reward will be ours—the impress of Jesus' Passion on our heart. . .

LI. He speaks to the weeping women.

1°. If we also compassionate Him, He will speak words of mercy and comfort to us.

2°. He says : *Weep not for me.* (1) Such is His love that He forgets Himself, that He might remember us. (2) Tears of compassion do not displease Him ; but better are tears of compunction for our sins—tears for our own sins, and the sins of others. . .

3°. If the just man is called on to suffer, what of sinners who are preparing themselves like dry wood for hell's fire ? For the dry wood, not bearing fruit, will be cast into the fire to burn. . . And terrible will be the fire of divine justice. *Then shall they begin to say to the mountains : Fall upon us ; and to the hills : Cover us.* Luke, xxiii. 30. . . These evils should be guarded against by true penance and compunction, therefore : *Weep for yourselves and for your children.*

LII. They bring him into the place called Golgotha, and they give him to drink wine mingled with myrrh ; but he took it not.

1°. The place of crucifixion was on a hill, visible to the eyes of all, for Jesus' greater humiliation and disgrace. . .

2°. It was a place loathed and shunned, for it was strewn with bones of the dead : a significant thing, as symbolic of the death of souls, to whom Jesus by His death was about to give life. . .

3°. The time : not, as at the nativity, mid-night ; but mid-day, for His greater confusion and shame. . . The Lord was immolated under heat of the sun—which symbolised the ardour of love that led Him to lay down His life ; and on

the day of the Pasch, when the assemblage of people was greatest. . . .

4°. The bitter drink offered Him symbolised (1) that He expiated the sin of gluttony and drunkenness ; (2) that we might learn to take in spirit of mortification what displeases our palate ; (3) that we may not do good works with a bad intention, thus offering Him, like the drink on Calvary, wine mixed with gall. . . .

LIII. They strip Him of his garments, and crucify Him between two thieves.

1°. The ignominious and cruel stripping was in expiation of the sins of immodesty.

2°. He freely stretched His arms on the wood, or rather on the altar, obeying His executioners, for the sake of the Father, to whom He became *obedient unto death*.

3°. *They dug my hands and feet*, said the Prophet speaking in the name of Jesus—all in expiation of the sins of our hands and feet. . . .

LIV. He hung on the cross.

1°. What suffering ! Stripped of His clothes and deprived of all honour, crucified in all His senses, immolated totally in body and soul, having not whereon to lay His head, His eyes looking down on hostility and sorrow—for three long hours He hung from four great wounds a mangled weight of agony. . . .

2°. And why all this ?

(1) For sin in general ; (2) for sins in particular ; (3) that He might be our exemplar in all the virtues, especially in patience and charity. . . .

3°. And the motive that prompted and sustained Him withal ? What else could it be but *Love* ? *He loved me, and delivered himself for me.* Gal. ii. 20. . . . Who so hardened as not to love Him in return ? *If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema.* 1 Cor xvi. 22.

4°. *They shall look on him whom they pierced.* John, xix. 37.
 . . They shall look on Him ; for He is a spectacle to the world, a spectacle to angels, a spectacle to men. . .

5°. Behold the great sacrifice by which the human race is redeemed : *Christ hath loved us, and hath delivered himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odour of sweetness.* Ephes. v. 2.

LV. What of the spectators ?

Some blaspheme ; some are converted ; some compassionate Him ; and some, not thinking of the Crucified, divide His clothes. . . And what is the world to-day but a great Calvary, where the same scene is being enacted ?

LVI. They divided His garments.

1°. The sacred garments, on touching only the hem of which virtue went forth, were torn from Him : *For us He was truly made poor.*

2°. They were divided into four parts—a symbol of the four quarters of the world coming to Christ, and receiving the stole of glory.

3°. But the tunic that was woven by His Mother was not divided. In the words of Jacob, but with a bitterness and sorrow that Jacob never tasted, she might say : *It is my son's coat ; a beast hath devoured Joseph.* Gen. xxxvii. 33. It has a symbolic meaning, it signifies : (1) the humanity of Christ, which cannot be separated from His divinity ; (2) the unity and indissolubility of His Church. And, inasmuch as the garment was double, having an inside and outside, it has a further symbolic significance, the outside representing the uniformity of the Church's external ceremonies, the inside internal charity and the other gifts of the Holy Spirit.

LVII. They who passed by blasphemed.

1°. Not content with crucifying Him and staring at His agony, they must further blaspheme Him. They utter the cutting taunt, He has saved others, Himself He cannot save ;

they ridicule His presumed dignity as king ; they laugh at His vain confidence in God, and His empty claim of sonship ; and they conclude by inviting Him, with biting sarcasm, *to descend from the cross*. . . How often, under another form, are those same words heard to-day from passers-by, the world's mortals ?

2°. He did not descend from the cross. No ; but He did what was greater—He rose from the tomb. . . Let us not listen to the world's invitation to descend from our cross. If we suffer on it for Christ, we shall later rise in glory with Christ. . .

LVIII. The two robbers.

1°. One bad ; so near the Lord, so near death, still he indulges in blasphemy : *If thou be Christ, save thyself and us*. The other good and penitent rebuked him, and said : *We indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds ; but this man hath done no evil*. Luke, xxiii. 41. Here is an example of true penance. He confesses his sins sincerely, and acknowledges the innocence of Christ ; from which he rises to the petition : *Lord, remember me when thou shalt come into thy kingdom*. In spite of all the opprobrium, he recognises Christ as Lord and King, not merely a temporal King ; neither does he ask to be delivered from present, but from eternal death.

2°. Besides an internal illumination of grace, the robber was moved by Christ's wonderful patience, and the charity by which He prayed for His enemies. . .

3°. Learn from Christ and the two robbers crucified with Him how to distinguish the three kinds of suffering. Some suffer for their sins, *justly* but *impatiently*, as the bad thief ; some *justly* but *patiently*, as the penitent thief ; others *unjustly* but *patiently*, as our Blessed Lord. . . The two thieves represent the human race condemned to the pains and miseries of life's Calvary. Now some, with Christ and through Christ, sanctify those pains and miseries, and are saved ; others curse and profane them, and are damned.

LIX. Many wonders occurred.

1°. The veil of the temple was rent. . . (1) Let our hearts be rent with sorrow and contrition. (2) Through the death of Christ are laid open the hidden mysteries of the kingdom of God—the mystery of our iniquity, of His justice, and especially of His mercy and love.

2°. *The earth quaked, and the rocks were rent, and the graves were opened.* . . These wonders can be taken to signify what in the moral order happened through the death of Christ: (1) stony hearts were rent with contrition; (2) obdurate vices were broken; (3) consciences, like open sepulchres, were laid bare in confession; and thus many rose to a life of grace.

3°. *Darkness spread over the whole earth:* (1) In this we behold the grief of inanimate nature, and its declaration of the majesty and innocence of Christ; (2) in mystic sense, we see in it a symbol of the blindness of the world through sin; (3) and the eternal darkness that awaits sinners in hell. . .

LX. His side was opened.

Christ willed that His side should be wounded (1) that our hearts should thereby be healed, because from the heart proceeds that which defiles a man; (2) that the fountain of His stupendous Passion might be laid open, which is no other than the ineffable love of His Heart for man: *He loved me, and delivered himself for me.* Gal. ii. 20; (3) that the fountain of grace might be revealed; (4) that a refuge of consolation might be within our reach; (5) that there might be poured out on us the treasures of that Divine Heart and of His divine charity. . .

LXI. The inscription of his cause was written over.

1°. The inscription was: **Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.**

2°. The Jews sought to change it; but Pilate for once

was firm, and said : *What I have written, I have written*. In like manner many Christians through various pretexts seek to change the meaning of the cross, or to misinterpret what it stands for.

3°. And the inscription was written in different languages. Significant fact—that every tribe and nation might understand the lesson which the cross teaches. . . .

LXII. The seven words of Christ on the cross. *

The cross, as S. Bernard says, is not only the couch of Christ sleeping, but the chair of Christ teaching. (1) *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*. (2) *Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in paradise*. (3) *Woman, behold thy son. Behold thy mother*. (4) *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* (5) *I thirst*. (6) *It is consummated*. (7) *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit*.

Of these words three refer to those who were present, three to Himself, and one to Himself and those who were present ! In a manner indeed all were spoken with a view to teaching us.

LXIII. First word on the cross.

Father, forgive them.

1°. In the midst of direst torments Christ did not complain. Nor was He content to suffer silently ; but He prays, and prays even for His executioners. . . .

2°. With what words? (1) *Father* : that by this name God might be reminded that sinners, however rebellious, were still His children. (2) *Forgive* : without restriction or limitation pardon all their offences. (3) *Them* : in which word are included all the enemies of God, without exception—executioners, Jews, Pilate, nay even, all who were the cause of His Passion, among which number I find myself. . . . (4) *They know not what they do* : behold the motive that inspires His prayer ; He excuses them so far as He is able. . . . Although their ignorance is by no means inculpable, still they

are ignorant, and for that reason their malice is lessened. . . . Question : am I in the habit of so benignly interpreting the intention of my neighbour ? . . .

3°. Our Blessed Lord prayed with a loud voice, that (1) we might the better know the feelings of His most merciful Heart, that (2) the executioners might be moved by His goodness, and be converted, that (3) He might teach us.

4°. Teach us what ? (1) forgiveness of injuries ; for such an example takes away from us every semblance of excuse. To appreciate the force of His example, we must reflect (a) how barbarous and ungrateful were His enemies, (b) how He forgave them from His heart, (c) at what a moment He did so, (d) above all, who He was. All the motives and conditions for vengeance seemed to be present, and yet He not only forgave, but prayed for His enemies.

(2) That He might teach us the love and mercy of God towards sinners, even towards those who were guilty of His Body and Blood without the slightest trace of repentance. . . .

(3) That He might teach us to render good for evil ; so doing, we make of our enemies so many friends—at least before God. . . .

(4) That He might teach us to overlook the faults of our neighbour, even those that appear most inexcusable. . . .

(5) That we might be able to say, not merely *Forgive Them* . . . but : *Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us.* . . . In the light of this, what do I wish, ask, and say, in regard to my enemies ?

5°. *They know not what they do.* Can the Lord say the same of me ? . . . Do I not know who Jesus is ? . . .

LXIV. The second word on the cross.

Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in paradise.

Of the two thieves between whom He was crucified, one blasphemed, the other repenting prayed to Him. The Lord, as if not hearing, did not reply to the blasphemy ; but to the word of prayer and penitence He gave a ready ear, and, forgetting as it were all His sufferings, at once replied : *Amen*

I say to thee. . . . No repelling, no denying, no deferring to a more opportune time, but granting his petition here and now.

1°. His petition? Nay more than his petition. He granted him (1) forgiveness of all his sins, no matter how many and how great; (2) eternal beatitude; (3) and without delay. . . .

2°. And with what words! *Amen I say to thee*, that is, I solemnly affirm to thee, sinner indeed but penitent, that *this day*, before the sun sets, after a brief spell of patience, *thou shalt be with me*, thou, robber though thou art, shalt be with me, the King of glory and Son of God, *in PARADISE*, that is, in beatitude, in limbo, where I will communicate to thee the beatific vision. . . .

3°. What lesson does this teach us? It teaches (1) How great is the generosity of God, even towards hardened sinners: how much greater must it be towards His faithful ones?

(2) How great is the power of prayer when it proceeds from a humble and contrite heart.

(3) How great is the power of grace in moving the heart.

(4) Of the two robbers one, but only one, was converted. Moral: avoid *despair* on the one hand, and *presumption* on the other. . . .

LXV. Third word on the Cross.

Woman, behold thy son. . . . *Behold thy mother.* S. John (xix. 25), says: *There stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother. . . and when Jesus had seen his mother and the disciple standing whom he loved, he said to his mother: Woman, behold thy son.* . . .

1°. As much as to say: Woman truly worthy of that name, woman by excellence, woman blessed amongst women, whom I will not now call mother, because by so doing I should deepen thy affliction, woman, I thy son, lest after my death thou shouldst be in want, I leave thee my other self, my disciple John, who will cherish thee with filial care. I select

him for this office, because he is a virgin, because he is full of piety and charity, because he has proved his love and fidelity by his presence here. . . . Therefore, John, I constitute thee son of Mary, I give thee Mary as thy mother. . . .

2°. But the mind of the Lord in so speaking took in more than John ; it extended to us his disciples, especially to those who stand by the Cross, whom He gave to Mary to be her children ; as if He said : O woman, true Eve, *mother of all who live*, extend thy mother's love for me to my disciples all. . . . And thou, my disciple, *behold*—love, reverence, invoke, and hear *my and thy mother*. . . . *And from that hour, the disciple took her to his own* : that is, he led her to his house, and looked upon her as his mother ; and, in like manner, she regarded John as her son.

3°. What are we hereby taught ? (1) The mutual obligations of parents and children, to be fulfilled especially in times of stress and difficulty ; (2) the treasure we possess in having Mary as mother, and how we should receive her ; (3) how pleasing to the Heart of Jesus is devotion towards His mother, seeing that He commended us to her with His dying voice ; (4) with what constancy we should bear at death separation from our friends, not as those who are without hope. . . .

LXVI. Fourth word on the Cross.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? . . . About the ninth hour, that is, about the third after noon, Jesus again broke silence, and spoke with a loud voice : that He might manifest to us the interior sufferings of His soul ; lest any one might think that He suffered only in body, or that He did not feel His bodily sufferings. . . . He made known His condition through prayer : *My God—mine* in a special way, because thou hast ever protected me with exceptional love ; now while in extreme trouble and agony and without protection, thou hast for a time deserted me ; nevertheless, in this dire condition, I know thee, and adore thee as *my God*, and as my God in a special way. . . . And

the appeal took this form, not that the Father did not know, but that we might enquire the reasons why. . .

1°. There was no complaint, but a making known His state by way of adoration. . . Complaint, if any can be conceived as present, is addressed to me, as thus: *Why, O sinner, hast thou forsaken me?* . .

2°. How was Christ forsaken? (1) In that the eternal Father did not free Him, but permitted Him to endure in head, hands and feet, without respite, the awful agonies of crucifixion. . . (2) Because as king of martyrs He was deprived of whatever consolation came to the martyrs. . . (3) Because He was deserted by nearly all His disciples and followers. . .

3°. What lesson are we taught? (1) How great was the patience of the Lord, who, while hanging for three hours on the cross, endured in silence the greatest external and internal agonies, to which only at the last He gave expression. . . (2) We are taught how we should bear exile of heart, and dryness in our devotions. . . (3) How God seems for a short time to desert the just and souls beloved by Him. . .

LXVII. Fifth word on the Cross.

I thirst. Exhausted by suffering, by heat, by loss of blood, our divine Lord suffered from violent thirst, which, however, He bore in silence until the moment of death arrived. Then He tells of His thirst; but He is offered vinegar. . . What are we to learn from this thirst of Jesus?

1°. He thirsted in body that (1) He might expiate our intemperance and the indulgence of our palate; (2) that He might also expiate our thirst for temporal things. . .

2°. He thirsted in soul, with a spiritual and mystic thirst, to do the will of His Father, to suffer for love of us, and to save our souls. . .

3°. Our Blessed Lord hanging on the cross, devoured by the pangs of thirst, presents, in mystic sense, an image of the

human race—souls without grace (for they will not seek it) like earth without water.

4°. From His thirst we should learn to thirst for, not things sinful and fleeting, but justice : *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall have their fill.* Matth. v. 6.

5°. We should slake our spiritual thirst by drinking the Blood of the Lord, not mingling it with the vinegar of fictitious repentance, not receiving it in a heart where it is turned to bitterness by the gall of sin.

6°. The corporal thirst of Jesus has passed, but His mystic thirst remains. We have it in our power to slake that thirst. He Himself tells us so : *I was thirsty and you gave me to drink. . . Then shall the just answer him, saying : when did we see thee thirsty ? . . The King answering shall say to them : Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me.* Matth. xxv. 35.

LXVIII. Sixth word on the Cross.

1°. *It is consummated* : my labours are finished and over ; finished is the work my Father gave me to do ; my mission has been completed—I have promulgated a new Law by word and example, I have drained the chalice for the redemption of mankind.

The word *consummated* can be further interpreted :—

- (1) The prophecies are all fulfilled.
- (2) Complete is the mercy and justice of God,—and the iniquity of the world . . full is the measure of sin, and the ingratitude of men.
- (3) Finished is the duel between life and death,—between the Saviour and the devil.

2°. What are we taught by this ?

- (1) That the Lord regarded and lived for one end only—to fulfil and consummate His mission.
- (2) That as all things written about Christ were fulfilled to the letter, so all things written about us—about our end and the end of the world—shall be fulfilled too. . .

(3) That we should so live that we may be able, when the end comes, to say with Christ: *It is consummated*—that is, I have finished the work which the Father gave me to do in this world.

(4) At the end of life, and on the day of judgment, it shall be said of us all, whether good or bad, *it is consummated*; it is finished, it is all over—but with what a difference! . . .

(5) Finally, only they who persevere in the cross to the end can say, like Christ, and with Christ, *it is consummated*. Hence the Apostle was able to say: *I have finished my course*. 2 Tim. iv. 7.

LXIX. Seventh word on the Cross.

Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. This His last word Christ pronounced with a loud voice, and then, bowing His head, He gave up the ghost.

1°. Let us reflect on the words (1) *Father*, I thy Son return to Thee with confidence. . . (2) *Into thy hands*, that is, into thy power and custody. The *hands of God*, in Scriptural language, designate omniscient intelligence and omnipotent will, in which every creature can rest securely. *The souls of the just are in the hand of God, and the torment of death shall not touch them.* Wisdom, iii. i. In the hands of His wisdom and power God possesses all things, and effects His will without the aid of instrument of any kind. . . .

(3) *I commend my spirit*, that is, I offer and commit to thee my soul which is entirely thine, that thou mayest receive it into the bosom of thy goodness and providence. S. Stephen later used practically the same words, when he said: *Lord Jesus receive my spirit.* Acts, vii. 58.

2°. What lesson are we to learn?

(1) To commend our soul with filial confidence into the hands of our heavenly Father, every night, and particularly at the hour of death; for in His hands alone is it safe. . . .

(2) By miraculous power the Lord cried out, and freely laid down His life at the time He willed. His cry though one

of agony was likewise a cry of triumph. In like manner, a holy death is man's true triumph. . . .

(3) Each one should commend his own soul ; nor is it prudent to depend too much on the prayers of friends : salvation is a personal affair, and as such it must be worked out. . . . Many commend their family, their business, their fortune ; but their soul—they forget that. . . .

(4) There is one kind of soul that cannot be commended to God—for the very good reason that God does not want it—and that is a soul disfigured with sin and bearing the mark of the devil. . . .

(5) We ought so to live that, when death comes, we may be able to offer our soul to our Creator, pure, undefiled and ornamented with every virtue—a mirror in which God can see His face. . . .

THE TWO STANDARDS.

Take heed you be not seduced.—Luke, xxi. 8.

IN order to know the world, with a view to avoiding its seductions, we cannot do better than consider it, according to S. Ignatius' figure, as a battle ground.

The two standards are spread: the standard of good, and the standard of evil. . . There are likewise two leaders, each summoning mankind to his own standard. . .

Mankind is divided between the two: some are enrolled under the standard of life; some under the standard of death; and, accordingly, some are saved, while others perish. . .

We must make our choice; we cannot remain neutral; it must be one standard or the other. Let us take heed lest we err, lest we be seduced; and, with a view to making a choice, we shall consider:

I. What are these two standards?

II. How should we avoid the one of evil?

III. How follow Christ's standard?

I. What are the two standards?

1°. On the one hand, the standard of Lucifer waves over the tent of Babylon, bearing the words: *riches, pleasures, honours, happiness*. The words are misleading, and should rather be: *impiety, idolatry, impurity, injustice, pride, hell*. These latter words are not inscribed thereon, because they would not suit Satan's purpose, inasmuch as no one wishes to

be openly and professedly wicked. . . He prefers to inscribe what are not in themselves really evil, but which easily lead to evil. Money, for instance, is not in itself a thing of evil, provided it be not used to offend God ; and the same can be said of pleasure. Accordingly, the wily enemy uses them, first to attract, and then to enslave.

2°. He calls together his soldiers—demons, and wicked men—and sends them abroad into the world to deceive and work ruin. . . He gives to each a flag, a net, and a chain : a flag to entice, a net to catch, and a chain to hold captive. . .

3°. He says to them : flaunt riches ; men will be easily won by love of them ; next they will easily sin in acquiring them, not stopping at injustice and detraction, and they will be sure to neglect the duties of a Christian life. . . Flaunt pleasures, for men are easily attracted by their naturally strong love for sensible delights ; by and by they will easily sin in pursuit of them ; and later they will plunge deeply into the grossly sinful. . . Flaunt honours, human praise, fame and glory, for men are easily attracted by the ribbons of life ; later they will go far in sin to satisfy ambition, and uphold empty vanity. . . Nor is it enough to get them to fall ; once down you strive to keep them down, by applying the chain of habit, indifference and contempt of religion. . .

4°. Thus instructed, the soldiers of Satan go forth into the four corners of earth ; nor is any state or condition of life free from their attack. With unremitting effort they strive to seduce the good from the way of virtue and religion, and to hold the wicked in the chains of vice, and make them even worse.

5°. Their fell work proceeds apace, the chief instruments of ruin being words, scandals, bad books, and sinful publications of all kinds, as also immodest or suggestive plays. . .

6°. The standard of Christ, on the other hand, is erected in the vale beside Jerusalem. There the King of humility and prince of peace is amongst His own, whom He regards with benignant eye. . . On His modest standard are inscribed the words : *penance, Christian life, patience, heaven.*

7°. He sends His ministers into the world—His angels, apostles, priests, and all who work for the salvation of souls. . .

8°. He sends them to persons of every condition and state of life, to the just and to sinners. . .

9°. And He says to them : Go, free poor souls ; strike from them the chains of the enemy ; show them the emptiness of riches and pleasures, and the smoke of honour and glory ; teach them penance and a Christian life ; urge them to persevere by patience in that same Christian life ; and tell them that when all is over heaven is the reward.

10°. The missionaries of Jesus obey : in every country in the world they are found, and in every walk of life, holding aloft the standard of the Gospel, knocking at the door of hearts, saying : *Do penance, for the Kingdom of God is at hand. Take up the yoke of Christ, and you shall find rest for your souls.* . .

11°. Invitations of this kind also come in various other ways : from thoughts divinely suggested to the mind, from hearing and reading, and from good example. . .

12°. Everyone who does good, and propagates piety is a minister of Christ ; and the voice of such an one is in a manner the voice of Christ Himself. . . When, therefore, a holy thought stirs you, or a preacher, or friend, or some untoward event, or remorse, moves you to good, you are to regard such as coming from Christ, who speaks in divers ways and through many agencies. . .

13°. Whoever hears this voice and hearkens to it is following the standard of Christ, and is being led to life and true happiness.

14°. Behold the two standards are advanced and wave before you, the one the standard of death, which many follow, the other the standard of life. . . Which do you choose ? If you elect to follow Christ as your leader, you must indulge no hankering for Satan's standard ; but you must be prepared to do those things for which Jesus' standard has been unfurled. . .

II. How should we avoid the standard of Lucifer ?

1°. By fleeing and avoiding it, as we would poison, a plague, slavery and death : (1) because it is the standard of Satan, standing for deception and death ; (2) because it is the banner of the enemies of God ; (3) nor will it avail to say that the greater number follow it ; for a multitude does not necessarily denote wisdom. *The number of fools is infinite.* Eccle. i. 15. *Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are that go in thereat.* Matth. vii. 13. See Apoc. xix. 19, 20. . . Do you want to join this crowd accursed of God ? . . If not, attend to the following : if you should have the misfortune to have already joined it, then leave it at once, while time is given to you ; if you are free, continue to avoid it carefully and with fortitude. Therefore :

2°. Beware of the colour-sergeants (those whose office is to enlist) and the soldiers of Satan's army. This one and that will say to you : sin is not so great an evil. . . There is the unmistakable voice of Satan's agent. Do not say to me that he is your friend. It does not matter, he is Satan's minister, speaking the words, and doing the works of his prince. Therefore, *Take heed you be not seduced.* . .

3°. Be humble. S. Antony in vision saw the earth full of snares, and exclaimed, who then can escape ? A voice answered and said, the humble man. . .

4°. Attach yourself closely to the standard of Christ. . .

5°. If you have the misfortune to be already implicated with the forces of darkness, it is necessary to rise at once, to break the bonds, and transfer your allegiance to the banner of Christ. . .

III. How should we be enrolled under Christ's standard ?

1°. The way to it is by true penance, and a sincere confession—the way of the Gospel.

2°. He who thus approaches finds himself thereby united to the glorious army of the elect. He thus finds himself in the company of the flower of the human race.

3°. Whenever an internal or external voice speaks to you of penance, the observance of the commandments, and other duties of a Christian life, lend a ready ear, for the voice is the voice of Christ. . . .

4°. Whenever, on the other hand, anyone solicits you to sin, or to the doing of anything that clashes with conscience, resist boldly ; it is an attempt of the enemy to get you to desert Christ's standard. Let your motto be : *Death rather than defilement.* (*Potius mori quam fœdari*).

Peroration. O Lord Jesus Christ, my King and my only good, I am thine ; enrolled by Baptism under Thy standard, I will adhere to it. Preserve me from becoming a traitor. Assist me by Thy grace that, in company with Thy faithful, I may always walk in the path which Thou hast marked out. Grant that by perseverance I may become a partaker in the reward which Thou hast promised : *To him that overcometh, I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of my God. . . . To him that shall overcome, I will give to sit with me on my throne : as I also have overcome, and am set down with my Father on his throne.* Apoc. ii. and iii. (Where many similar promises are made to those who conquer).

VOCATION AND STATE OF LIFE.

I therefore, a prisoner in the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation in which you are called.
—Ephes. iv. 1.

IN regard to state in life, the world can be divided into two classes : some live in peace and tranquillity contented with their lot ; some, on the other hand, are dissatisfied and discontented and ever seeking change. . What, it will be asked, is the cause of this difference ? Is it that the former are rich, and the latter poor ? By no means : how often it is said of a rich man, he has everything and still he is unhappy !

What therefore is the cause ? For the most part it is this, some have found their congenial state in life ; but others have missed it. If then one is in the station of life destined by God, and, in addition, fulfils the duties attached thereto, one enjoys happiness—that is so far as it is possible here below.

Hence arises the practical question, how attain to that state ? And the reply is, *by following one's vocation*. Accordingly we shall consider :

I. What is a Vocation ?

II. Why should we follow it ?

III. How should we follow it ?

I. What is a Vocation ?

1°. It is, as the name implies, a call to a certain state in life ¹ ; or it is the state of life as destined and prepared by Divine Providence for each one. As a prudent father

¹ This is vocation to a state. There are many kinds of vocation or call ; for instance, to existence, to faith, to glory, to a state. It would be well too to distinguish between a *call* to a state and the *election* of that state.

prepares a proper place in life for each of his children ; as a gardener arranges his plants in soil suitable to each ; as a watchmaker fits together several wheels to make a watch : so the Father of the human race and supreme artist of the universe endows various human beings with proper gifts, by which they may discharge their several functions, with the result that there is evolved that ordered and complex body called human society.

Or, to use another example, as the Creator endows the physical body with members by which it can do its work, so too He constitutes the moral body with a view to the harmonious working of society—destining and adapting each one to a proper place. This destining is a *vocation*.

2°. It may be asked, is a vocation the same as a *state*, *condition*, *office* or *profession* in life ? No, there is a difference ; and the difference will be best understood by defining each. A *state* is a fixed and settled course of life (hence we say such a person has entered the married state, and such a person the religious state); a *condition* in life implies grade of fortune or position ; an *office* is the duty, for the most part public, which one has to perform ; and a *profession* is the public exercise of some art or industry or special office. . . A *vocation*, on the other hand, is the will of God considered as destining or calling one to this or that particular state. The following expressions (with which we are familiar), *to know one's vocation*, *to follow it*, *to miss one's vocation*, *to seek it*, or *to fall away from it*, set it forth from different points of view.

3°. There are various states, some nobler than others : in like manner, there are various vocations, all good, but some more perfect than others. The states are : the ecclesiastical, the religious or conventual, and the lay—which latter is of course the state of the majority. . . In the lay state, there are various professions ; such as that of the doctor, the lawyer, the merchant, the artisan, the soldier, and so forth. . . There are, accordingly, various vocations corresponding to those states : one is called to be a priest, and another is destined to be the father of a family ; one is called to be a merchant, and another to be an artisan, or servant. . .

All these calls or vocations, however diverse, are, nevertheless, good ; because they are the expression of God's will, of what is pleasing to God, and as such they draw man to what is suitable and best for him.

4°. It may be further asked, is there a difference in vocations ? Yes, just as there is a difference between the members of the body, each one of which is good and useful so long as it is healthy and gets its proper work to do. . .

5°. Does it follow that a person in high station is better than one in a lower ? No ; better or worse does not apply to place, state, or profession. But the terms apply to persons ; he is the better who the better fulfils the duties of his state : a good soldier is better than a bad general ; a good servant is better than a bad master. On the stage he is the better actor who the better plays his part, be it that of a shepherd or a king—by that he will be praised or blamed, not for the costume he wears. . . So with the world, it is, in a manner, God's theatre, in which each one plays the part that God assigns him. . .

6°. Another important question is, how are vocations determined by God ?

R. When Almighty God calls a man out of nothing, He endows him with powers and qualities suitable to a certain position, and at the same time gives him graces. If a man compasses that position, he finds it proportionate to his powers, he finds himself, to use a familiar expression, the right man in the right place ; with the result that he can easily fulfil his duties ; and, doing so, he shall live well, and, having lived well, he shall die well.

7°. [In this connection it may be well to add that God's call is not always the most pleasing to an individual, or the kind that satisfies parents. . . The great thing is to find out by prayer, prudence and right reason, whither God is beckoning, and, at the same time, to be on one's guard against the refracting and distorting influence of pride, ambition, and pre-conceived notions].

8°. Finally, we may ask, how can we be said to choose a vocation, seeing that it has been determined by God ?

R. (1) In the first place, *seeking*, not choosing, would be the better word.

R. (2) We can, however, be said in a sense to choose, because we use our freedom of will, *just as a traveller is said to choose his way*.

II. Why should a Vocation be followed ?

1°. Because it is the will of God. And to do God's will—for this was I born, for this was I sent into the world: *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*. . . This I should put before every other will, be it my own, or be it that of my neighbour. "May thy most holy will, O Lord, in all things and through all things, in me, regarding me, through me, round about me and all I possess, be done now and for eternity."¹

2°. Because this call is best for me. . . The heavenly Father Himself, in His supreme wisdom and goodness, assigns me a place: who, I ask, can choose me a better? . . . Can my parents? Can I myself?—myself so prone to self-deception, so ignorant of the future. . . What can be safer, what can be better, than that God should choose for me?

3°. Because on it depends my happiness in this life, and, in great measure, my happiness in the next. A man's true happiness consists in the perfect and easy fulfilment of the duties of his state in life; with this fulfilment, a man loves his state and lives in peace with all, in peace with God, in peace with his neighbour, in peace with himself; and such peace spells contentment and happiness. A state then is as armour that is suited to our strength, as boots that fit our feet. . . Hence, to considerable degree, our salvation depends on it; for, in a destined state, burdens are proportionate to our strength, and graces to our danger. . .

4°. Otherwise, the soul, like a tree planted in foreign soil, will wither and dry up. . .

¹ Aspiration of St. Louis de Ponte.

5°. Because missing one's vocation is a usual cause of sorrow, of vice, of despair, for a whole life time. . .

6°. Because any other course, no matter how good and attractive it may appear, is for us false and pernicious. . .

7°. Because we have but one life, and it is unlawful to make it empty, to corrupt it, or render it barren of fruit. . .

8°. Who would think of embarking in a ship without a pilot for the sole reason that it was beautiful, while others perfectly safe were at hand? . . What the hand of the steersman is to a ship, that the directing influence of a vocation is to a life. . .

III. How should it be followed ?

1°. Two things should be firmly borne in mind, and these are : we should strive to know our vocation, and, when known, we should follow it, with our whole heart, with love, without regret, without complaint, and with deep persuasion that this is the true and best way. . .

2°. Two things should be avoided, namely, imprudence and precipitancy. . . One acts imprudently, if one is influenced by passion, or solely by temporal gain ; *precipitate y*, if reasons are not sufficiently weighed, if the council of some prudent person is not sought, and if one does not pray, and so forth. . .

3°. How can I know God's will ? Who will point it out to me ?—You shall know it if you attend to the following : (1) preserve your heart clean from vice ; (2) pray to God ; (3) weigh the reasons—look to the end in view, consider the state with its burdens and dangers, take into account your disposition and your weakness. In this do not trust to yourself alone, but seek the advice of your spiritual director.¹

4°. How comes it that so many miss their vocation ? Some by following the lead of false passion ; some by looking

¹ See Malou : *Règles pour le choix d'un état de vie* : Damanet : *Manuel du directeur spirituel*.

only at the temporal side ; some by passively yielding to the desire of relatives without seeking the will of God. . .

5°. Who are they who find and follow it ? They who pray, and, setting aside the promptings of flesh and blood, follow the will of God ; who, when they find it, rest content with their state and sanctify it ; who—to quote an instance or two—follow the example of Tobias, or of Aloysius Gonzaga. . .

6°. There are those who have reason to lament and complain, because they have not thus proceeded in embracing their state of life—to them what can one say ? . . Do you fulfil the duties of your state in life, to which God, out of His divine goodness, has generously called you ?—rest satisfied. . . Do you live badly ? are your burdens too heavy for your powers ? and are you too late to change ? Then you need a helper, a leader and a friend, you have need to go to Him who has said, *Come ye all to me.* . .

7°. There are some who complain and are little satisfied with their state : (1) because, they say, their burdens are too great, or (2) because they have little time for piety and the working out of their salvation. . .

These are two delusions by which the devil strives to disturb those whose vocation is already fixed. . .

8°. We should consider a vocation from its threefold point of view—before choosing, in the act of choosing, after we have made our choice ; each involves a special course of action.¹

Peroration.—Wherefore let us with upright and earnest heart seek the will of God : this is our true and only fortune in life. Let us seek it before we embrace our state, and then we shall attain to that for which Providence has destined us ; and let us seek it after we have made our choice, that, in our state, we may live and die piously, peacefully, and as becomes a Christian.

¹ See sermon on the *Duties of Parents and Children in regard to Vocation*, p. 147.

THE LAST SACRAMENTS.

FIRST DISCOURSE.

Is any man sick among you ? Let him bring in the priests of the church. . . James, v. 14.

It is necessary that a Christian should live well ; but it is much more necessary that he should die well.

There is one thing on which a holy and Christian death principally depends, and that is the pious reception of the last sacraments.

And if there be not a few who depart from life without the last sacraments, or who do not receive them as they ought, it is chiefly because during life and the time of health they did not give sufficient thought to this matter so grave.

Lest the same should befall us, let us in all prudence turn over in our minds the following considerations .

I. What helps has the Lord provided for the faithful who are dying ?

II. What is the importance of those helps ?

III. How can we obtain them ?

I. What helps are provided ?

1°. They are those which are commonly called the *consolations of religion*, the *rites of the Church*, or, simply, the *last sacraments*. . . Let us try to realise what they mean. . .

2°. Those last helps are prepared for us by our Lord

Jesus Christ Himself. The most benign Saviour, who cares for His faithful on their entry into the world, who has done so much for them in life, has not omitted to make provision for them on their departure hence.

3°. Nay all the more, because then, above all, help is needed, that His faithful ones may sanctify the end of life, may not suffer shipwreck in coming into port, may not be overcome in the bitter fight with sickness, death, and the devil. . . .

4°. He has provided His helps, and these are the last sacraments : Confession, the Viaticum, and Extreme Unction.

5°. How sweet and tender and touching is the mercy and love of Christ for His sick and infirm ones ! . . . *Is any one sick among you ?* Behold holy Mother the Church is present that she may light up the bed of suffering with a heavenly ray. . . . Behold Christ comes in the person of His confessor that He may forgive the sins of him who lies low. . . . Then a table is prepared, a table containing the Blessed Eucharist as a viaticum. . . . And on that table too is a holy vessel wherein is Oil that gives spiritual strength. . . .

The very house is full of heavenly consolation, breathing the fragrance of divine anointing, and the odor of immortality. . . .

II. What is the importance of those helps ?

1°. They are necessary, because it is essential to die well. . . .

2°. They are necessary, on account of the assaults of the devil, who will redouble his efforts, *having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time.* Apoc. xii. 12.

3°. They are necessary, because of the sickness to be endured and to be sanctified. . . .

4°. They are necessary, by reason of the afflictions of mind. Fears and griefs, on the approach of death, will knock at the heart of many : (1) on account of life not well spent and *now over*, (2) on account of family considerations, (3) at the thought of judgment that is at hand. . . . In

these dire straits, the efficacious and one only consolation is contained in the balsam of Religion. . .

5°. Can we doubt it when we consider what Religion brings ?—its fruits of (1) confession ; (2) the Holy Communion as a viaticum ; (3) extreme unction, which brings aid (*a*) not only to the soul, by grace, by remission of sin, by taking away the effects of sin, by bracing up the soul ; but (*b*) also to the body, by restoring its health, if such be God's will. . .

6°. Oil, because of its natural properties, is the symbol of healing ; but the oil of extreme unction, in higher and more excellent manner, heals, strengthens, illumines, and makes happy. . . Yes to such an extent, that this most sweet sacrament is the consummation of a Christian life ; and if fruitfully received, the Christian can say with his Lord, *It is finished*.

III. How can we obtain this final aid ?

It chiefly depends on God's mercy ; while, on our part, it is usually conditioned by the observance of certain " It's " :

1°. *If* during life we were in the habit of receiving the sacraments well. . .

2°. *If* we frequently ask, especially through the B. V. Mary, the grace of a happy death. . .

3°. *If*, in a spirit of faith and in all eagerness, we receive the last sacraments in time. . . In regard to the latter, there is a double and fatal prejudice : (1) first, the foolish notion that once they are received the life of the sick person is to be despaired of ; (2) secondly, the fear that, at the sight of the priest, the sick person might be much disturbed and terrified. . . This prejudice is empty and imaginary. . . But even were it true, even though the patient should thereby be disturbed, is it proper on that account to neglect the soul, and expose it to danger ? . .

4°. It is expedient also to call in a doctor in time. . . And to doctors I would say that there is a most serious obligation to impress strongly on their patients, be they

masters or be they servants, when they consider that there is danger, the necessity of receiving the sacraments.

5°. Give word to the priest, even though there is no very serious sickness : he can, by virtue of his office, bring many consolations, which are good not only for the soul but for the body also, by reason of the peace and elasticity of mind that so often follow from his visit. . .

6°. Extreme Unction, as already stated, is good not only for the soul but for the body also. Impediments, however, may stand in the way ; such as : (1) lack of disposition on part of the recipient, and (2) lack of faith or confidence ; while, in regard to the body, the sacrament can produce no effect, if the sickness be so advanced that nothing short of a miracle could cure. Remember that Extreme Unction, in so far as the body is concerned, will not effect a miracle, but, if it be God's will that the patient should recover, it will operate through natural causes ; but those natural causes cannot be present, if the sickness be too far advanced.

7°. It is highly desirable that the person attending the sick should be both skilled and pious ; for this purpose societies or confraternities might be formed ; and many souls would be saved thereby.

Peroration. To die well you must live well. So live that, when the end comes, you may be able to say : *I have fought a good fight* ; that, when your hand holds the blessed candle, you may hear with joy the litany of the dying, and offer in holiness your soul to its Creator.¹

¹Consult the Ritual for the beautiful words of the Church in commending a soul to God.

THE LAST SACRAMENTS.—(*Continued*).

SECOND DISCOURSE.

CARE OF THE SICK.

Heal the sick.—Matth. x. 8.

THE care of the sick is one of the greatest works of mercy which the Lord Jesus will consider and reward as having been done to Himself: *I was sick, and you visited me.* Matth. xxv. 36. So great indeed is this work of mercy, that the eternal salvation of the sick frequently depends on it.

The care of the sick considered in general embraces various offices. Some have to do with the body, and some with the soul; some are to be fulfilled by the person in charge of the sick, and some by the confessor; some are to be rendered before the reception of the last Sacraments, some during, and other some after, the reception. At present we shall confine our attention to this last division, and shall consider :

I. The duties preceding the reception of the Sacraments.

II. The duties at time of reception.

III. The duties following the reception.

I. The duties preceding the Sacraments.

These include a certain knowledge to be acquired; the care to be rendered to the body; and the care to be given to the soul. We shall briefly consider each point :

1°. A certain knowledge is needed, in regard to the patient, in regard to the sickness, regarding the persons who approach him.

(1) As to the patient, it is important to know his disposition, what kind of life he has lived, whether he is entangled in the snare of any vice or obstacle to his salvation.

(2) The nature of his sickness should be known, and an upright and prudent doctor should be called in in time. From him you can learn the gravity of the infirmity, how long it is likely to last, whether it is contagious, and if there be any danger of delirium. In particular, you should take care to ask him if it be necessary to have the last Sacraments administered here and now. This of course not in presence of the sick person, but out of his hearing.

(3) In regard to the persons who approach him, you will do well to find out, whether they are pious and religious, or whether, on account of ill-feeling, or depraved love, or lack of religious feeling, they may not be a cause or occasion of injury to his soul.

And any such information you can prudently, according to the necessity of the case, communicate to the confessor.

2°. The care to be rendered to the body : (1) the directions of the doctor should be accurately carried out ; (2) cleanliness should be strictly observed ; (3) sweetness, mildness and patience should be shown towards the patient, no matter how trying it may be to do so ; (4) noise should be stopped and stillness secured in the room, even to the extent of speaking low ; (5) if the patient or family be in need, necessary aid should be supplied.

3°. Care in regard to the soul. Strive to get the patient to sanctify his sickness, that he may prepare for a fruitful reception of the last sacraments.

The sickness, I say, should be sanctified. There are various means that will tend towards this :

(1) Pious objects, such as pictures, also holy water ; while everything tending to favour worldliness or drag down the senses should be removed.

(2) Conversations about business, children, and enemies,

should be avoided ; as also everything that has an injurious effect, or that tends to fatigue the mind.

(3) The motives for resignation should be quietly suggested, such as the following : infirmities are the portion of human nature ; no one, not even the Saints can escape ; but the Saints by their patience have sweetened the bitterness of sickness. . . In the designs of God sickness is a great means of salvation. . .

(4) Objections or complaints should be met ; they are usually the following : (a) if there were question of myself alone I should be satisfied, but what will become of my wife and children ? (b) I wish I had a few years more to do penance ; (c) this sickness is so great that I can do nothing, no not even pray ; (d) I am so young ; (e) it is so difficult to bid good-bye to parents and all. . . All these complaints can be met by directing attention to the divine will, which is more precious than anything we can desire ; also by pointing out the sweet providence of God in regard to orphans and widows ; and let the principles of faith be strongly enforced. . .

(5) Temptations should be restrained : the more frequent temptations at such a time are temptations to doubt about the faith, temptations to despair or presumption, of vain glory, of impatience, of hatred and revenge. . . Against these, as they may arise, the proper remedies are to be suggested.

(6) Exercises in piety, as also legitimate mental relaxation at proper time, should be prudently recommended. Tedium is overcome by variety. Prayer, pious reading, and, if the sickness be protracted, the repeated reception of the sacraments, will help much.

II. Duties at time of reception of the Sacraments.

This heading will contain two sections : 1° the manner of disposing the sick to receive the sacraments ; 2° the administration of the sacraments.

FIRST SECTION.

How to dispose the sick for the sacraments.¹

Many things must be here distinguished and attended to : the sick person should be prudently admonished of his danger, and as to the necessity of making his will ; a confessor should be called in ; and the patient should be prudently induced to wish to receive the sacraments. A few words regarding each point.

1°. He should be admonished of his danger. . . . When there is certainty regarding the gravity of the disease, and danger of death, no one should venture to deceive the sick person with fatal delusions. If he dislikes the thought of death, or has not been in the habit of thinking of it, he should be gradually led to a knowledge of his state ; for instance, by such statements as the following : one should not trust too much to what friends say, or put too much confidence in the power of the doctor ; it is a prudent thing to put one's spiritual affairs in order and leave the course of the sickness in the hands of God. . . .

2°. If one has not already made a will, *it should be done at the beginning of the illness*. Great prudence and circumspection should be used regarding the matter of the will. The patient should be left to his own conscience, except he ask for guidance. But if there be any restitution to be made, it should of course be urged strongly.

3°. A confessor should be called in as soon as the sickness is discovered to be dangerous ; this should never be neglected, even though the patient be deaf and dumb, demented, or delirious, or a young person not yet an adult.

4°. Influence should be brought to bear on the patient so that he may desire to receive the sacraments.

(1) When danger of death is detected, it is important that the patient should not postpone making his confession.

¹ Much of this applies to the priest only, and must not be preached.—Translator.

Accordingly, he should be exhorted not to let himself be deceived by the fallacies of the devil, the promises of the doctor, or the words of relatives and friends. The latter may dissemble the danger to themselves, or may be afraid of frightening the sick person. But away with that deception. Give the patient an opportunity of utilising the time that is still left for him, whilst he is in possession of his faculties, by receiving the sacraments. Postponement and delay are dangerous and have spelled the ruin of many a soul.

(2) How should one proceed in this exhortation? As a rule it is not prudent to speak suddenly and abruptly about confession, even when the danger is far from slight; but after asking the patient how he is, and whether he is suffering, he should be exhorted to acquiesce in the divine will, to unite his sufferings with those of Christ, and to offer them to God in atonement for his sins. Then you can gradually come to the point by asking would he not like to see the Lord the Pastor of souls. . .

(3) The following motives can then be urged: it is easy to put the affairs of the soul in order, while one's mental faculties are clear; peace and consolation will be sure to follow; it will be a relief even to the body; there is the danger that, by loss of speech or by mental wandering, confession may become impossible; and then there is such loss and misery when one is not in the state of grace—the merit of suffering is lost, at most time is short, and eternity depends on it. . . By a little tact the patient could be induced to confess and receive Communion, by suggesting, for instance, the making of a novena for his recovery, and of receiving, for this purpose, Holy Communion on the first and last day.

(4) The pretexts for postponing should be prudently and skilfully met. Delay usually arises from either a vain hope of recovering, or false shame, or sinful attachment to creatures, or dread of the difficulty of confessing. . .

If the patient is strenuously determined to defer confession, he must not be urged too strongly; but rather he should be asked to name a day when he would wish a

confessor to be brought in. . . . If, however, there be danger of delirium, or death, no time should be lost. Yes, the patient should be openly told that God has promised pardon, but has not promised a to-morrow to one who postpones.

And although the moribund should obstinately resist the exhortations of neighbours, of friends, and of the priest, he should not even in that case be given up, but should be still entreated with all patience, charity and confidence. Urge alternately the reasons for fear, and the motives for confidence. . . .

The bonds or prejudices by which he is bound should be carefully examined, and answered, either by talking to him or by apt reading, according as circumstances will suggest.

Prayer in particular should be resorted to ; if possible, he himself should be induced to pray, and if he does, victory is assured.

What if the unfortunate man responds to all appeals by blasphemies and insults? He should on that account be treated all the more with kindness and charity. It would be well to leave him for a time until the mind grows quieter, and until he is found in a better mood ; then let him be approached again gently. The priest, even if not admitted, or if received with blasphemies, should never give up in despair ; but he should, with the charity of the good Shepherd, come day after day, and ask to be admitted, if not as priest, at least as a friend.

If, however, he remains obdurate and is in extreme danger and at the mouth of hell, the following means should be adopted : (a) *Prayer*—also the prayers of others should be sought, and some Masses should be offered ; (b) a vow to this effect might be made ; (c) the H. Scapular or some blessed medal should be put round his neck ; (d) for this the permission of some friend, though perhaps not himself religious, should be sought ; (e) the doctor if he be a religious man can be of much use, either by speaking himself to the moribund, or by getting him to admit the priest ; (f) or perhaps the moribund could be influenced to do something pious, such as breathing a short prayer, or giving an alms ;

(g) finally, he should be recommended to the prayers of some pious community or confraternity. . .

SECOND SECTION.

The administration of the Sacraments.

Confession.

When the patient has decided to confess, the person in charge can do much to facilitate it, by suggesting the importance and happiness of a good confession. Also he might make mention of a general confession, prudently insinuating to the patient that he might ask the confessor about it. . . A general confession is always useful, and often it is necessary. . . The confessor should frequently ask if there is anything still troubling his conscience, lest, which is not at all infrequent, a sin should be concealed at that dread moment. . . If it be clear that the patient has to make restitution, or repair scandal, or if an actual occasion of sin has to be removed, the confessor will prudently suggest that these obligations must be fulfilled as a necessary condition for absolution. . . If there be reason to fear that, through ignorance or forgetfulness, the patient does not know the necessary truths, he should be instructed in them.

After the examination of conscience, the patient should be assisted to elicit contrition ; this can be done by suggesting the motives, and by reading slowly some formula of contrition, which the patient should repeat with him.

And the priest should not forget to call to his mind frequently that the penance best and most pleasing to God is patience and resignation and conformity to the will of God in his present affliction. Let the patient understand that it is an heroic act to offer himself to God, saying : *O Lord God, do with me as thou wilt. Into thy hands, O Father. I offer my entire being.*

Get him to fulfil his sacramental penance as soon as possible, lest later he may not be able to do so.

The Viaticum.

1°. The room should be put in order : (1) let cleanliness be attended to ; (2) a table should be placed beside the bed, and a white cloth spread over it ; on it should be a crucifix between two lighted candles, holy water, and a vessel of plain water ; (3) ornaments may be added which serve to add to the solemnity of this august ceremony ; (4) the bed should be covered with a clean linen cloth, and a white napkin should be placed over the breast of the patient.

2°. Before receiving the Viaticum, prayers pertaining to Holy Communion should be suggested to the patient, such as acts of faith, humility, confidence, and love. . . After Communion, he should be assisted to make a thanksgiving—unless he wishes to be alone with the Divine Guest.

Extreme Unction.

1°. Preparation of the room and table, as in case of the Viaticum ; but instead of the vessel of plain water there should be a larger vessel of water for washing the hands, and a clean towel ; also a plate containing some crumbs of bread, and seven or eight little balls or pellets of cotton or flax. . . Whilst the anointing is taking place the nurse or person in charge should be present to uncover the hands and feet.

2°. Preparation of the sick . .

The end and effects of Extreme Unction should be explained. The end is to give to the sick person the assistance that he needs. The effects are : to purify and strengthen the soul ; to alleviate the body, and, if it be God's will, to restore it to health. But if these effects are not fully received, it is due to defect of proper dispositions. These dispositions are : (1) the state of grace ; (2) vivid faith and confidence in the power of Extreme Unction ; (3) feeling of true sorrow. . . Whilst the sacrament is being conferred, the sick person

should ask pardon of the sins which were committed by the different senses.

III. Duties after the reception of the last Sacraments.

We shall consider what should be done prior to the agony, during the agony, and after the soul has departed.

Before the agony.

1°. After the sick person has received the last sacraments, great care should be taken that he be not distracted, by useless or dangerous visits, from keeping himself united to God and preparing during this precious time for his great journey, if so be God's will.

2°. See that he gains one, or more, plenary indulgence, see particularly to the Pontifical indulgence.

3°. Get him to elicit frequently pious acts, such as those of faith, hope, love of God and his neighbour, forgiveness of injuries, detestation of sin, and conformity with the divine will. . . .

4°. Let the crucifix be frequently offered to be kissed, while he repeats the words, *My Jesus, mercy!* or other pious aspirations.

5°. Also sprinkle holy water often.

6°. In a case of sudden death, if a priest be not present, the moribund should be assisted to make an act of perfect contrition with a desire for confession. Strive particularly to get him in such case to offer from his heart the sacrifice of his life to God, in union with the death of the Saviour; in this an act of perfect contrition is contained: *Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends.* John, xv. 13.

In the agony.

1°. Call in a priest if possible.

2°. It would be advisable for the relatives to withdraw.

3°. As soon as the agony begins, let the prayers of the Church for the dying be immediately recited.

4°. When the moribund has lost the use of reason, prayers are better than exhortations.

5°. Let him be frequently sprinkled with holy water, and signed with the sign of the cross, and assisted to kiss the crucifix and image of the B.V.M., and ask him to pronounce the holy names of Jesus and Mary, either by his lips, or in his heart; and get him to repeat frequently the prayer, *Mary, mother of grace, mother of mercy, protect me from the enemy, and help me at the hour of death.*

6°. Suggest acts of resignation to the divine will, acts of contrition, and confidence in Christ Jesus.

7°. As the end approaches, put in his hand a blessed candle, as a confession of the Catholic faith.

8°. When he is breathing forth his soul, let all present kneel and pray for him. If he be still able to do so, get him to pronounce the most holy name, *Jesus, Jesus, Jesus*. If he be not able, whisper it into his ears, also the words: *Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit; Lord Jesus receive my soul. Holy Mary, pray for me. Mary, mother of grace, mother of mercy, protect me from the enemy, and receive my soul.*

9°. Do not too often feel his hands and feet.

10°. The signs of approaching death are: weak or intermittent pulse, laboured or suspended breathing, hollow and sightless eyes, tremor of the hands and mechanical motion sweat on the forehead, and tears from the eyes. . .

After death.

1°. The signs of death are: coldness and rigor of body, complete cessation of pulse and respiration.

2°. The eyes and lips should not be closed too soon, but the face should be covered with a cloth—the reason of this is, lest he may not be fully dead.

3°. Let the prayers of the Church be recited.

4°. The body that was the temple of the Holy Ghost should be decently and reverently buried.

5°. The obsequies should be celebrated according to the condition of the deceased : many Masses should be said, and alms given for the repose of the soul. This is an obligation that should be seen to by the relatives.

6°. How in those sad circumstances should relatives act ?
(1) They should receive this affliction with submission to God. (2) They should pray much, and attend the obsequies. (3) They should give alms according to their means. (4) For the same end, they should perform good works, and gain indulgences. (5) They should see without delay to carrying out the will of the deceased, especially in regard to his obligations, or the Masses that he stipulated to be said.

DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

FIRST DISCOURSE.

GENERAL VIEW.

Thy name is as oil poured out.—Cant. i. 2.

THERE is a certain name in the mouth of every Christian ; the children of faith are taught to link it with the name of Jesus ; a name whose sweet melody makes glad the heart, while filling it with joy and exultation ; a name in short not less glorious than it is lovable : and that name is Mary.

That name is as oil poured out ; because preached, invoked, and celebrated in canticle throughout the world, it diffuses light and grace in the hearts of the faithful.

Blessed are they who know how to draw and drink from the life-giving waters that flow from that name !

That we may know and understand the name of Mary, we shall enquire :

I. Who is the B. V. M. ?

II. What honour should we pay her ?

I. Who is the B. V. M. ?

She is the woman above all women glorified, crowned with the triple crown of dignity, power and goodness. The first crown is the symbol of what Mary is in herself¹ ; the second and third indicate what she is to us. Under this twofold aspect we shall consider Mary.

¹ See Binet : *Le Chef-d'œuvre de Dieu* ; Poire : *Triple couronne de la Mère de Dieu*.

1°. What is she in herself ? (1) She is the woman radiant with beauty and gift and privilege : (a) in purity, *the* virgin, a virgin above all virgins ; (b) in grace, the most holy of all created beings, and that from the moment of her Conception ; (c) in dignity, the highest and noblest work of God's hands.

(2) She is the woman enriched with all virtues ; which she concealed beneath the mantle of humility, as she trod the ways of our every-day life.

(3) She is the woman resplendent with glory : (a) in Scripture, where her praises are celebrated, and where she is commemorated in figure and prophecy ; (b) in the Church, where she is honoured by feasts and temples in her name ; (c) in heaven, where she reigns on star-set throne beside Her Son the King. . .

2°. What is she in regard to us ? (1) She is our *Mother* with all a mother's heart. . .

(2) She is our *Queen*, possessing power against our enemies, and with hands of bounty outstretched towards us. . .

(3) She is our *Exemplar*, to be imitated by us her children in every state and condition of life. . .

II. What honour should we pay her ?

Under this heading we can consider 1° our duties towards her, and 2° when and how we can put them in practice.

1°. Our duties towards her : (1) honor ; (2) gratitude ; (3) love ; (4) invocation ; (5) imitation ; (6) propagating devotion to her.

2°. When and how ? (1) daily, particularly on her feasts ; (2) through the rosary, the scapular, pious reading, her image in our homes, and by joining a confraternity or society in her honour.

SPECIAL HEADINGS.

There are two guiding lights in devotion to Mary :—
 I. What is Mary doing for me ?—II. What should I do in regard to Mary ?

I. What kind of devotion should I have towards Mary ?
 A *special* devotion. As in every church there is an altar dedicated to Mary, as in the firmament there are two great luminaries, the sun and moon, so in the temple of my heart. . . Why ?—Because—1° Christ has taught it from the cross ;—2° the Church teaches it by joining the *Hail Mary* to the Lord's prayer ;—3° because Mary is full of grace and excellence ;—4° because she is full of power ;—5° because she is full of goodness ;—6° because she is the gate of heaven ;—7° because she is the refuge of sinners, now and at the hour of death. . . II. How can this devotion be put in practice ? . .

How should Mary be invoked ?—I. In a *special* way ; because she is the *Mother of God* ; and she can help us. . . *My mother, ask, for I must not turn away thy face.* 3 Kings, ii. 20. . . *Such is His will, who wishes us to receive everything through Mary.* S. Bernard (On Nativity of B. V. M.). . . II. *As children in filial manner* ; because she is a mother who wishes to assist us. . . *Can a woman forget her infant ?* Isaias, xlix. 15. . . She loves sinners ; because 1° they are miserable ; 2° because, were it not for sinners, she would not be the Mother of God ;—3° because her Son so loved sinners.

DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.—(Continued).**SECOND DISCOURSE.****PARTICULAR VIEW.**

All good things came to me together with her.
—Wisdom vii. 11.

SEEING that devotion to the B. V. Mary is so precious, we should strive by every means in our power to acquire, preserve and foster it in our hearts. Accordingly, we shall consider what devotion to the Mother of God means for us, and how we are to practise it, or :

I. Why Mary should be honoured.**II. How we are to honour her.****I. Why should Mary be honoured ?**

1°. Because she is the Mother of God, and Queen of heaven and earth. . .

2°. Because she is my mother . . my mother who is in heaven, most loving, and most powerful. . .

3°. Because I am exhorted, and appealed to, wherever I turn, to honour and invoke her : I am exhorted by God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost ; I am exhorted by the angels and the saints ; by the universal Church ; by, perhaps, my own experience ; even hell itself, by the intensity of its woes, utters this exhortation. . .

4°. Because she is not only my mother, but my sweetest consolation : my life, my sweetness, and my hope. . .

Christ gives ; Mary dispenses. Christ is the fountain ; Mary in a manner the canal. . . Without her is nothing but *death, bitterness, and despair*, or at least delusive hope that will never attain its end. . .

5°. Because she leads us to her Son. . . Mary's giving her Divine Son into the arms of the aged man Simeon in the temple, and to the young Stanislaus in tribulation, is a symbol of the influence of Mary on the soul : Mary speaks, and forthwith Jesus comes into our hearts. . .

6°. Because she makes us like to herself and her Son. . .

7°. Because she is the protectress of all, and the sure hope of those in despair ; the health of the weak, the refuge of sinners, the help of Christians. . . Is any one excluded ? Is any one so miserable as to be forgotten ? *Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb ? and if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee.* Isaias, xlix. 15. . . Child of Mary, why do you doubt ? What is your misery ? . . Do you fear that her virgin eyes will turn away from your foulness ? Remember you are her son, she your mother, holding balsam in her hands. . .

8°. And whence this so great goodness of Mary ? Has she love, and towards whom ? Is it towards pure souls alone ? No, towards sinners also, whom her Son has so loved. . .

9°. Mary is the star of the sea, shining for all who are voyaging through life. . .

10°. Devotion to Mary is, according to the common opinion of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, the most sure sign of salvation. . . *This ship will never perish at sea.* In these prophetic words S. Xavier blessed the ship of his friend James Pereira, which bore the name of the *Holy Cross*. And from that day, while other ships perished, the *Holy Cross* bore the stress of winds and waves without foundering, and escaped pirates, because, no doubt, it was providentially protected. Like to that ship, in the voyage through life, is he over whom Mary watches. . .

11°. Regarding devotion to Mary we can here apply the words of S. Bernard : *This is religion holy, in which a man lives purely, falls rarely, rises quickly, walks cautiously, is*

enriched frequently, rests securely, dies confidently, is purified promptly, and is rewarded copiously. (De bon. relig.).

12°. There are various classes of Christians in regard to Mary: Some do not honour her; some do so, but imperfectly; some honour her as they should. . .

13°. Why do some not experience Mary's help? Because they do not ask it; or they ask, but do not approach the sacraments; or, perhaps, they approach them, but do not avoid the occasion of sin. . .

II. How are we to honour Mary?

In devotion to Mary, we distinguish what is necessary, what constitutes a degree, what rises to perfection.

1°. For the first, it is required that something be done in Mary's honour; as Costerus says, *a little suffices, provided it be constant.* . . For instance, there should be a daily practice of some devotion, which may consist in honouring her, and invoking her aid. In particular, she should be invoked in affliction and temptations. She should be invoked with filial confidence. . . And let not the sinner despair. Even the offering of his impure hands, Mary does not despise. . .

2°. For the second, there is required an imitation of her virtues—so resplendent in every way, her heart so like the heart of Jesus. In her is found a perfect example for every state and condition, in particular the virtues of chastity, innocence, humility, charity, and patience. . .

3°. For perfection, there is required, in addition to the foregoing, propagation of her devotion according to one's state and condition. . .

They who have this devotion feel without doubt the truth of the saying, *There came to me with it all good things.* They shall feel the protecting hand of the Mother of God, now, and at the hour of their death. . .

DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.—(Continued).

THIRD DISCOURSE.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

*I will put enmities between thee and the woman
 . . she shall crush thy head.*—Gen. iii. 15.

As children of Mary we have reason to rejoice to-day. It is fitting that children should rejoice at the honour paid their mother, that a people should rejoice at the glory of their queen.

The Immaculate Conception is a glory peculiar to Mary, and most pleasing to her heart. It is the beginning and foundation of her greatness. It is her victory and her crown; her victory over sin, her crown of glory and grace.

Accordingly, the Immaculate Mother of God is usually represented as crushing the serpent's head, and at the same time crowned with stars: the former, the symbol of her triumph over sin; the latter, of the celestial glory with which she shone from the moment of her conception. . . We shall then consider:

I. How great is the glory of Mary!

II. How this glory redounds to her children.

I. How great is the glory of Mary!

What is the Immaculate Conception? Why did God confer this privilege on Mary? What are the effects of the Immaculate Conception on Mary's soul? What are the symbols and figures of Mary's greatness?

1°. What is the Immaculate Conception? It is a privilege by which Mary alone among the children of Adam was preserved from original sin.

In this connection, the preacher might refer to the origin of the human race, primeval happiness, paradise, the serpent, sin and its punishment. . .

2°. Why did God confer this privilege on Mary? Because she was to be the Mother of the Word Incarnate, and it was fitting that *the most High should sanctify his own tabernacle*. Ps. xlv. 5. Wherefore the Son of God chose His Mother, and adorned her, so that she became *the woman clothed with the sun, with the moon beneath her feet, and on her head a crown of stars*. . .

3°. And many are the symbols and figures of Mary: *the dawn*, the *moon by night*, the *lily* amongst the thorns, *paradise* closed against the serpent, the *woman crushing the serpent's head*. . .

The *ark of the covenant*, made of setim wood, overlaid within and without with purest gold.

The table containing the loaves of proposition: Thou shalt set upon the table loaves of proposition in my sight always. Exod. xxv. 30.

The golden candlestick with its seven lamps—for Mary is a light to the world. . .

The rainbow in the sky, of which it is said: *I will set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me, and between the earth.* Gen. ix. 13. *I shall see it, and shall remember the everlasting covenant.* Gen. ix. 16.

The bush on fire, but not consumed. Exod. iii. 2.

The fleece of Gedeon. Judges, vi. 37.

The closed gate of Ezechiel. Ezech. xlv. 1, 2.

The rod of Aaron that flowered. Num. xvii. 8.

The tower of David. Cant. iv. 4.

Abisag the Sunamitess. 3 Kings, ii. 22.

Esther, to whom Assuerus said: *This law is not made for thee, but for all others.* Esther, xv. 13.

Judith, who was hailed as the *glory of Jerusalem*, the *joy of Israel*. Judith, xv. 10.

Rachel, the beautiful, mother of the saviour of Egypt.
Exod. xxx. 23.

Debbora and *Jahal* : the former, a prophetess, led the army of Israel against Sisara, and put him to flight ; the latter slew him with nail and hammer.
Judges, iv.

In these figures and symbols are set forth the beauty, the influence, and the power of Mary against the enemy.

II. How her glory redounds to her children.

It does so through her example, and through her prayers. From Mary we learn that : 1° the true treasure in the eyes of God is sanctifying grace ; 2° true beauty is an immaculate soul ; 3° we too should be clean of heart ; 4° and how we can guard ourselves against the contamination of this world.

1°. Sanctifying grace is the true treasure in the eyes of God. When God wished to enrich Mary, He found nothing more precious in His treasury than sanctifying grace. . . They who possess it are rich ; all without it are poor. . . For what is that grace ? It is a certain divine life, by which he who possesses it is constituted a son of God, and like to Him, as iron becomes like the fire in which it is fused.¹

2°. True beauty is an immaculate heart. There is physical beauty, and there is spiritual beauty ; the former exterior, the latter interior. And each has its opposite ; namely, respectively, deformity, and turpitude—the one external and affecting the body, the other internal and affecting the soul. . . There may be external beauty without internal, just as a sepulchre may be fair on the outside (Matth. xxiii. 27) ; and that for the most part is what the splendour of the world amounts to. . . But of internal beauty it is said : *Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee.*

3°. We too should be clean of heart—why ? (1) Because we are children of the Immaculate Mother ; (2) because

¹ See Sermon on *Sanctifying Grace*, p. 382.

nothing defiled shall enter heaven ; (3) because we shall be happy even in this life ; (4) and because the clean of heart shall see God. . .

4°. How are we to guard against the contamination of the world ?

(1) It is necessary to avoid the dangers, and keep our feet clean of soiled ways. We should be like the clean-footed dove that dwells in holes in the rock. . . (2) It is necessary to wash our souls in penance, patience, and the sacraments. . . (3) It is necessary to light a fire of charity, in order to burn away the rust. . . (4) And it is necessary to invoke the aid of Immaculate Mary. . .

Conclusion. O Immaculate Virgin, Mother of God and our mother, look upon us thy poor, miserable children, and see how unlike thee we are ! But thou canst, O Mother, cleanse us from all stain. This we hope from thy pure hands. Assist us here, that we may be found worthy to dwell hereafter where thou art, in that home where nothing defiled can enter.

DEVOTION TO ONE'S GUARDIAN ANGEL.

He hath given his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.—Ps xc. 11.

ONE of the most pleasing truths of our holy religion is that which teaches that angels are sent by God to be our custodians and guardians. What a striking testimony this is to the goodness of God, and to the dignity of the soul ! And, if only we learn how to avail of the protection of our guardian spirits, with what security we can walk amidst the vicissitudes and perils of life ! But this truth, like so many others, is lost sight of by many, because they do not think in their hearts. That we may not be of that number, we shall consider :

I. What faith teaches on this subject.

II. What our Guardian Angel does for us.

III. What our attitude should be towards him.

I. What faith teaches on this subject.

1°. It teaches that angels are sent to be our guardians. . . As Raphael, in visible form, accompanied Tobias on his journey, so a guardian angel walks by the side of each one of us during life. . .

2°. In addition to this, the Doctors of the Church teach¹ that there is a guardian angel for distinct communities.

3°. What a blessing, and what a privilege, from the goodness of our heavenly Father ! And it appears all the greater when we consider what an angel is. He is a prince of the heavenly court, resplendent in nature, in intelligence, in sanctity, in beauty, and in power. . . With what splendour

¹ See theology *De Angelis*.

and power S. Scripture represents angels as endowed ! *Behold there was a great earthquake. For an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and coming, rolled back the stone. . . And his countenance was as lightning, and his raiment as snow. And for fear of him, the guards were struck with terror, and became as dead men.* Matth. xxviii. 2 and following. *And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow was on his head, and his face was as the sun.* Apoc. x. 1. . . *I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power ; and the earth was enlightened with his glory.* Apoc. xviii. 1. See also Dan. x. 5, 6 ; 4 Kings, xix. 35.

4°. What are angels ? They are ministers at the court of the most high King. They are vessels of glory, and lights that are ever burning. Legions innumerable, they are divided into nine choirs : angels and archangels, principalities and powers, virtues, dominations and thrones, cherubim and seraphim—all burning with love, ministering to and chanting the praises of Him *who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.* Hebr. i. 7, Isaias, vi. 3.

5°. It is meet that our heavenly Father should not leave us without help. For the angel of darkness, the devil, having fallen from heaven for pride, crosses our path in life, as he crept into the paradise of our first parents. Nay even, *he goeth about, as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.* 1 Pet. v. 8. Weak that we are, what if we should be left to ourselves ? The contest would be too unequal. Accordingly, it has pleased divine goodness to offset, in our behalf, diabolic subtlety by angelic help.¹

6°. The Father, accordingly, has given us aid, and aid beyond measure, in sending to each of us one of his princes. . . And why does He think so much of me ? Because poor and miserable though I am in myself and subject to all the infirmities of this coil of flesh, I am still great in His sight ; I am still His son, an heir to the Kingdom of heaven,

¹ See theology ; also hymn in the office of Guardian Angels.

redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ and adorned with the splendour of His grace. Therefore, God has given me, His adopted son, a guardian worthy of the dignity with which He has endowed me; a guardian so powerful that he can protect me, even while I bear my soul's treasure in a frail vessel.

7°. Let us, therefore, recognise the paternal goodness of God in sending us a guardian angel; and let us show our gratitude and appreciation of this heavenly custodian, by remembering his presence and following whither he leads. . .

8°. And let no one say: I have never seen my guardian angel. R. You have not, but others have; for instance Eliseus and his servant: *Fear not, for there are more with us than with them. . . And the Lord opened the eyes of the servant, and he saw; and behold the mountain was full of horses, and chariots of fire round about Eliseus.* 4 Kings, vi. 16, 17. (The context will explain the reference). But, if we cannot see with the eyes of the body, we can see with the eyes of faith. . . You are never alone, but always with the angel of God. When you see a fellow being with the eyes of flesh, try, at the same time, to see his angel with the eyes of faith. Thus will be revealed to you the supernatural and invisible world, which is ever bound up with what is outward and visible; and thus will be fulfilled the words of S. Paul: *Our conversation is in heaven.* Phil. iii. 20.

II. What our Guardian Angel does for us.

1°. Our angels defend us from evil: *In their hands they shall bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.* Ps. xc. 12. And they do so better than the most tender mother guards and protects her child. For they defend us not only from the evils of the body, but especially from those of the soul, by suggesting good thoughts, by admonitions and inspirations. . .

2°. They prompt the just to good, and sinners to repentance. . .

3°. Whence comes it that many do not experience the

guardianship and help of their angel? R. In the first place, there are some who are aided without knowing or recognising it; and there are many who place obstacles in the way of their Guardian Angel. What are these obstacles? . .

4°. What does the angel do in case of one who perseveres in sin? What for one who tries to live well—who prays and performs good works? What at the hour of death? What after death? . . All these points can be illustrated by the example of Tobias and Judith. Tob. v. and following; Judith, xiii. 20.

III. What should be our attitude towards our Guardian Angel?

1°. We should have *reverence for his presence, devotion to his benevolence, confidence in his care.* S. Bernard, Sermon 12th on Ps. 90.

2°. And we can show reverence by remembering the presence, not only of the Angel who walks by our side, but likewise the Angels of others; and by doing nothing that could possibly offend our Angel.

3°. We can show reverence towards the Angels of others by being careful to do nothing that could cause scandal to those committed to their care: *I say to you, that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father who is in heaven.* Matth. xviii. 10.

4°. We can show devotion by gratitude, by submission, and meekness, as also by imitating the virtues of the Angels. . .

5°. And what are the virtues that we should imitate in particular? Their great obedience to God, and conformity with His will; their love for men in ever remaining by their side; their care and constancy in fulfilling the office assigned them; and their union with God, for, while employed on earth, their thoughts are in heaven: *Their angels . . always see the face of my Father who is in heaven.* Matth. xviii. 10.

6°. From this it can be inferred who are those clients that bring consolation to their Angels; and who, on the contrary, distress them. . .

7°. We shall show fidelity to our Angel by frequently

invoking him—at morning and evening ; in desolation and temptations ; yes even in sin, if we find ourselves in this miserable state. . . Also by invoking the Angel of others, especially of those with whom we associate or have to do. . .

3°. We can show our gratitude, not only by expressly thanking our Angel, but, likewise, by doing what is pleasing to him ; for instance, by frequenting a church and by attending divine service, by prayer, and by co-operating in good works. . . We can do so especially by assisting the Angels ; for instance, by keeping others, in particular the young, from evil, and by leading them, through example and instruction, to good, etc.

Peroration. Would that this faith, this most sweet devotion, would sink deeply into our mind ! Then truly we would pray, and, praying, we should receive abundant aid from our Guardian Angel, not only through the course of life, but particularly at the hour of death, what time he will lead us with joy to the eternal tabernacles.

DEVOTION TO THE MOST SACRED HEART.

You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains.—Isaias, xii. 3.

Exordium. Two forms are here suggested.

First. Great are the afflictions that overtake one in this life ; but great also are the consolations provided by the all merciful God in the Heart of Jesus. Would that all could know how to draw hence ! But of many the Saviour has reason to complain in these words : *They have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and have digged to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.* Jerem. ii. 13. . . What is the cause of this foolishness ? Because they do not know how to draw from the divine fountain ; nay even, they are often in ignorance of its existence. . . That we may know, etc. . .

Second form. There is no object of Christian piety more august, none sweeter, none more conducive to salvation, than the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The very pronouncing of the name is calculated to stimulate love. Would that we could appreciate this devotion ! To do so would be to find a treasure, a paradise on earth. With a view to this, as also that we may love this precious devotion more and more, and foster it in our hearts, we shall consider the following points :

I. What is devotion to the Sacred Heart ?

II. Why should we practise it ?

I. What is devotion to the Sacred Heart ?

1°. It is a devotion analogous to devotion to the Five Wounds of the Redeemer. Just as we venerate the hands, the feet, the pierced side of our Blessed Lord, so too we worship His divine Heart.

2°. And we worship the real heart that was wounded for us on the cross, not any mere image of it.

3°. This devotion is none other than a particular way of honouring Christ Himself; just as devotion to His wounds is devotion to the Lord Himself, manifested under a special aspect.

4°. And why this special way of honouring Him? . . . Because there are special motives for doing so. His wounds are honoured as the symbol of His Passion, and as the effect of His love for us. His divine Heart is worshipped (1) as the seat, and, therefore, as the symbol of the love He bore us; (2) as the source and fountain of all His favours, particularly of His Passion, and the institution of the Blessed Eucharist; (3) as the sanctuary of all grace and virtue; (4) as the standard and exemplar of sanctity, to which our heart should conform.

5°. These four motives are most truly found in the Sacred Heart of Jesus. (1) As the head is the seat and symbol of intelligence, so the heart is rightly regarded as the seat and symbol of love and all affection. Hence we frequently hear the following expression: such a man has for me the heart of a father, the heart of a friend. . . (2) As from the heart of a father all good things flow to his family, so from the heart of Jesus all graces come to us: as the sun is the source of light and heat in the material world, so the Heart of Jesus is the fount and origin of all the love and bounty that are diffused in the world of souls. . . (3) As the heart of a just man is the sanctuary of the Holy Spirit (hence the martyr Leonides kissed the breast of his sleeping son Origen), so, but in an infinitely higher degree, the sanctuary of God is the Heart of Christ Jesus, in which *dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead corporally*. Col. ii. 9; . . . *in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*. Col. ii. 3. . . That Heart is the mystic glory and treasure that *lieth hid within*. Cant. iv. 3. . . Its images and figures are: the ark of the covenant, the precious gem spoken of in the Gospel, the treasure hidden in the field, the garden

and paradise into which the spouse of the Canticles is invited : *I am come into my garden, O my sister, my spouse.* Cant. v. 1. . . (4) The heart of Jesus is our exemplar : our heart, that is all the affections of our soul, should be regulated and made to conform to some type. But where find a type that can satisfy their craving ? It is one, and one only—that which beats in the breast of Jesus.

6°. What of the origin of this devotion ? Although from the beginning the Heart of Jesus was an object of worship to the B. V. M., to S. John, to S. Chrysostom and others, it pleased the Lord to make the devotion known in a special manner, through a private revelation in 1670, to Blessed Margaret Mary, to whom He showed His divine Heart burning with love and wounded with a lance, whilst He said : *Behold my heart, which has so loved men, etc.* Thereafter, especially in 1763, devotion to the Sacred Heart was approved by the Church, and propagated in a wonderful manner.

7°. How practise this devotion ? We can do so by venerating, invoking, and meditating on, the Sacred Heart. . . Let us approach it as an open sanctuary, and as the fountain of graces ; let us strive to console our Blessed Lord for the indifference and ingratitude of men ; let us strive to repair the injuries and sacrileges committed against Him, especially in His sacrament of love ; let us keep the image of the divine Heart before our eyes, and bear it in our hearts ; let us join a society or confraternity bearing that divine name, and let us be specially devout to it on Friday, particularly on the first Friday of the month. . .

8°. How does this devotion differ from that to the Blessed Sacrament ? R. There is a difference, and still close affinity. I can, for instance, adore the Blessed Sacrament, without particular reference to the Sacred Heart. Nevertheless, since the Lord manifests His love in a special way in the Eucharist, and at the same time commends devotion to His divine Heart, it is natural, in view of this intimate connection, that, while we adore the Eucharist, our eyes of faith and devotion should likewise turn to His divine Heart. . .

9°. How does it differ from devotion to the Passion? Practically as in the preceding case. When I consider how the divine Heart has loved me, the great proof of that love, His Passion, naturally occurs to my mind, so that the memory of the Passion is essentially contained in devotion to the Sacred Heart—so much so indeed, that holy Mother the Church commemorates in her prayers and hymns the intimate union of the two, the love and suffering of the Saviour.

II. Why should we practise this devotion?

1°. Because we are urged by many motives, some coming from God, some from the Church, and some having to do with ourselves. . . In the first place, such is the loveliness of the Heart of Jesus, that it merits, and should win, the love, the veneration and devotion, of every human heart. Would that this loveliness were known! It shines forth at every point of our Saviour's life, from His birth in the manger to His death on the cross, and especially in the sacrament of His love. . . In the tears that ran down His cheeks, in the sweet words of forgiveness to sinners, in every work of mercy He performed, the love of His sacred Heart was evident and shone forth. . .

2°. We are urged by motives of gratitude and reparation. . . A suitable way is herein found of returning thanks for His many and great favours. . . And seeing that the majority of mankind are not only unmindful of what is done for them, but offer insult instead of thanks, it is meet that His devoted servants should make atonement for such conduct.

3°. We are urged by the invitation of the Lord Himself, who, in manifesting the mystery of His Heart, sweetly and earnestly seeks the love of faithful souls. . .

4°. We are prompted thereto by personal advantages, in the precious fruits we can thereby gather. For the Sacred Heart, and therefore devotion to it, is the *fount of consolation*, of *grace* and *all sanctity*, of *light*, of *purity*, and of *strength*. . .

5°. In particular it is the fount of consolation to our heart in every sorrow, whether external or internal, that may afflict it. Sorrow may be deep and great, but deeper and greater are the resources of that Heart, and, what is more, they are never exhausted. . .

6°. It is the fount of sanctity ; it makes our heart like itself. . . All sanctity is in the heart ; it consists in grace, and virtue, and affections of which the heart is the seat. Wherefore let us mould our heart, and we mould our lives. And in one way only can we mould our heart, that is, by making it like to the Heart of Jesus. And how can we do this ? By drawing near to His Heart and coming within its influence. Cold iron placed in the furnace soon becomes hot ; a mirror exposed to the sun reflects its rays ; and so with all who approach the Heart of Jesus. Of old the face of Moses shone because he talked with the Lord. Exod. xxxiv. 29. And the Apostle points the moral for us : *We all beholding the glory of the Lord with open face, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.* 2 Cor. iii. 18. We are transformed into Christ ; we become meek, humble and patient, as Christ Himself was ; we are animated by the spirit of Christ, so that we can say with the Apostle : *I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me.* Gal. ii. 20.

7°. It is the fount of light. It illumines the eyes of the soul, so that it can discern the world of spirit, the world of grace, the world of the interior life. . . It illumines by showing the form and exemplar of every virtue—the exemplar expressed in symbol. Just consider it : what do the lance, the thorns, and the cross signify ? Do they not stand for sorrows, internal and external, and ignominies ? . . But why those in the Sacred Heart ? By what torturer were these inflicted ? Was it not by me and my sins ? And for this cruelty and ingratitude, the divine Heart flashes back, not vengeance, but a flame of love. . . In that heart I see no gems, no flowers, no golden diadem, but in it a lance, and around it thorns. And yet what do I find in its inmost recesses ? Not vengeance, not ill-will, not impatience, not bitterness, but light and love's purest flame. In a word,

charity and charity only. And in that charity all virtues are contained. Thus does the Lord, by this image of sanctity, illumine us, that, by the influence of its light, He might imprint this same sanctity on our hearts. . .

8°. It is the fount of purity, by cleansing us from sin, even that which appears light to us, and by making us detest and avoid it. . .

9°. And it is the fount of strength. . . We are strengthened by copious graces, which flow from the divine Heart as their source. This is particularly true of charity, of which it is said : *Love is strong as death.* Cant. viii. 6. . . *Where there is love, there is no labour, or the labour itself becomes an object of love.* S. Aug. *De bono viduit.* c. 21.

10°. This devotion has rich promises attached to it : *I will pour out the riches of my Heart on those who honour it.* . . Here a word of explanation can be given as to the blessings that come to the various classes of persons : to fathers of families, to the young, to those who labour, to the just, and to sinners. . .

11°. Besides these promises which are for all, there are others that are special to priests, and those who have the care of souls, as may be read in the promises made to Blessed Margaret Mary.

Peroration. O Lord Jesus, I give Thee thanks for Thy great goodness in making known to us the love and treasures of Thy Sacred Heart. May it be to us all a sun in the midst of heaven, hidden by no cloud, but radiating, illumining and vivifying ! May it fill all hearts with its light and love, thus converting this vale of tears into a paradise !

PERSEVERANCE.

He that shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved.
—Matth. xxiv. 13.

There are some who, after sincere conversion to God, say from their heart : now I am, I hope, in the state of grace ; I have found peace in the Lord ; only one thought distresses me—shall I persevere ? This feeling is indeed salutary, since anxiety on the point is usually the beginning of perseverance.

Great is perseverance in the economy of salvation. It is much to begin ; but it is everything to persevere. . . . Many begin well ; but were not saved—why ? . . . Because they did not persevere. . . . And why did they not ? Was it that they were not able ? No ; they were able, for God who gives power to begin also gives power to persevere—that is, to those who will it. . . . But they were not as anxious as they ought to have been about perseverance. Thinking that they were safe once they began, they, by listening to the prompting of the enemy, grew careless, and, later, relapsed into their former sins. . . . In order to avoid this evil, it will be useful to consider the following points :

I. What is Perseverance ?

II. Why should we persevere ?

III. How can we persevere ?

I. What is Perseverance ?

1°. It is a continuance in good works. It is one thing to begin ; it is another to continue. . . . It consists not only in resolving to continue a good life, but in taking the efficacious means of doing so. . . .

2°. Perseverance is either *initial*, that is, which fails soon after one attains to spiritual life ; or *partial*, which continues for some time, until obstacles are encountered ; or *total* and *final*, that is, which perdures to a happy end. . .

3°. We have an example in the case of the traveller who sets out on a difficult journey in the teeth of wind and rain. Even though he may sometimes stumble and fall, he braces himself up and with determination pursues his way.

4°. Perseverance may be viewed as a *gift* or a *virtue*. It is a *gift* as it comes from God ; it is a *virtue* on our part, in so far as we co-operate with God's grace. As a gift of God it is a special grace, which, in the words of S. Augustine, should be eagerly sought. It does not exclude, but rather presupposes, our co-operation : in a word, it is God's and our united work. . .

5°. It has been appropriately named the gate, for it is the only one, opening into heaven. . .

6°. Perseverance, theologically considered, and in so far as it is the work of grace, is twofold : *imperfect*, and *perfect* perseverance. The former is temporary fidelity in the divine service, that is for a time, which each one, with the aid of the ordinary grace given to all, can maintain. . . The latter is perpetual fidelity extending to and including the hour of death, so that it thus includes final perseverance : for this is required a *special help from God*, and is called by the Council of Trent (Sess. 6, can. 16) the *great gift of perseverance*. Although strictly speaking it cannot be merited, it will, nevertheless, be granted as a result of prayer ; we cannot strictly, as a matter of right, merit it, but, in the words of S. Augustine, we can do so *suppliantly*. If we faithfully respond to the graces given us and apply the means, this great gift of perseverance to death will be granted us : *Being confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in you will perfect it unto the day of Christ Jesus.* Phil i. 6.

II. Why should we persevere ?

Every motive, every reason, whether considered from God's point of view, the reward offered, or our own interest, urges us thereto.

1°. Necessity urges us : since, without perseverance, it little avails to have begun. In the matter of salvation, not the beginning, but the end, counts. Speaking generally, it is like a battle or a race, the finish is the thing : *All run indeed, but one receiveth the prize. So run that you may obtain.* 1 Cor. ix. 24. And again : *He that striveth for the mastery is not crowned, except he strive lawfully.* 2 Tim. ii. 5.

2°. If, for instance, an angel should this moment descend from heaven and say : *All here assembled are in the state of grace*, would that be sufficient for salvation ? By no means ; one important condition remains, and that is—*provided we persevere.* . . .

3°. Gratitude towards God urges us. God has shown extraordinary mercy to me ; and is my return to Him to be fresh sins and added injuries ?

4°. Personal considerations urge me thereto. If I persevere, I remain in peace of conscience, in the freedom of the sons of God, in sweet expectation of an eternal reward. . . . If I do not persevere, I fall back into the slavery of the devil, under the yoke of passion, and into remorse of conscience. . . .

5°. If I do not persevere, I am like a liberated captive who chooses to return to prison ; or like the man of whom the Lord says : *This man began to build, and was not able to finish.* Luke, xiv. 30.

6°. Otherwise my labour is all lost. I am like a ship that sinks before the harbour is reached ; or a harvest that is destroyed before it has fully ripened. . . .

7°. I may have already merited much ; but all merit, precious though it be, is lost with the loss of sanctifying grace. . . .

8°. I fall into a state worse than ever : *The last state of that man is made worse than the first.* Matth. xii. 45. . . . *The*

earth that drinketh in the rain which cometh often upon it . . . receiveth blessing from God. But that which bringeth forth thorns and briars, is reprobate, and very near unto a curse. Hebr. vi. 7, 8. . . For it had been better for them not to have known the way of justice, than after they have known it, to turn back from that holy commandment which was delivered to them. For that of the true proverb has happened to them : The dog is returned to his vomit ; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. 2 Pet. ii. 21, 22.

9°. Perseverance should be earnestly prayed for. We should be diffident of ourselves, for we are weak, bearing our treasure in frail vessels. . . . Examples should teach us ; such, for instance, as those of Saul, Solomon, Judas, and Tertullian. . . . Let no one say : I am safe, and *I shall be moved no more.* Ps. xli. 2.

10°. And it should be carefully guarded. The human heart is very inconstant, as experience too often teaches. . . . And the causes are : seduction and human respect, coming from the world ; sloth on our part ; envy and hatred from the devil. . . .

III. How can we persevere ?

1°. Not as many do, who persevere only till temptation occurs, or occasion presents itself, or till some pleasure has to be given up ; nor like those who are faithful while consolation and a feeling of piety last. . . . These all are the weak and slothful ones, who act rather from passing impulse than from solid conviction and sense of duty. . . .

2°. Not as those just mentioned ; but as men, strong, constant, holy. As men who act from conviction and determined will. As men who understand the importance of virtue, not merely theoretically, but with deep persuasion, who, at the same time, have a virile mind by which they sustain that persuasion. As men who know not only how to make a noble resolution, but, still more important, how to keep it. . . .

3°. But can I persevere, and how ? . . . I can ; that is

the will of God, who neither looks for, nor commands, an impossibility. . . I can ; but not of myself : *Not I, but the grace of God with me.* 1 Cor. xv. 10. . . Perseverance is a gift of God ; but a gift which we can and ought to obtain by prayer (S. Aug.).

4°. What should I do to obtain it ? In other words, what are the means ? . . Flight, fortitude, and taking up arms. . . A word as to each :

5°. Flight ; avoid the danger. What is that ? It may vary for each one ; but you know from experience, and from the advice of your confessor, wherein danger lies for you. . .

6°. Since, however, all contests cannot be avoided, since some must be faced and gone through, the second great requisite is Fortitude : *Labour as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.* 2 Tim. ii. 3. . . *Conquer thyself.* . . Remember the example of the brave who, following the example of Christ, have conquered the world. *Have confidence, I have overcome the world.* John, xvi. 33. . . *Strive manfully ; custom is overcome by custom.* Imitation, i. 21. . . In a word, be not afraid, no matter who and what your enemies may be. . .

7°. But arms are necessary for the fight. What are they ? Prayer, the Sacraments, good reading, enrolment in a sodality or confraternity, assisting the poor, work, and useful occupation. . . Above all, devotion to the B. V. Mary. . .

Peroration. With these arms we shall conquer, provided we never lay them down. . . Mary is the star shining above life's troubled sea. If we guide our course by this star, we shall steer the barque of our salvation safely into port.

HEAVEN.

FIRST DISCOURSE.

GENERAL VIEW.

I rejoiced at the things that were said to me : we shall go into the house of the Lord.—Ps. cxxi. 1.

I. Why should we think of Heaven ?

II. What is Heaven ?

III. Who are in Heaven ?

IV. How can we get there ?

I. Why should we think of Heaven ?

1°. Because the Holy Ghost tells us to do so, lest we sin.

2°. Because the Lord and the Apostles frequently bring before our mind the thought of our eternal reward : *Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven.* Matth. v. 12. . . . *For the hope that is laid up for you in heaven, which you have heard in the word of the truth of the gospel.* Coloss. i. 5.

3°. Because Heaven is our country, our city, our home : *We have not here a lasting city, but we seek one that is to come.* Hebr. xiii. 14.

4°. Because in the labours, tribulations, and temptations of this life, the thought of Heaven is a consolation, a stimulus, and a source of strength : if the work terrifies, the reward invites.

5°. It is meet that our hearts be fixed where true joy abides. And true joy is not here, but beyond the clouds.

Here joys are false, and, in passing through them, we must beware, lest we lose sight of those that are eternal. . .

6°. Because if we do not think of Heaven, we shall certainly think of earth, and the things of earth, and, thinking of them, we shall miss Heaven. . .

7°. Because we should unceasingly prepare ourselves for Heaven, and labour for Heaven, and lay up treasures there. . .

8°. Because our conversation (by which I mean our life) should be where He dwells who is to us father, mother, brother, and all that is dear, from whose hands come *every best gift, and every perfect gift.* James, i. 17.

II. What is Heaven ?

1°. It is called the kingdom of God, the city of God : *Glorious things are said of thee, O city of God.* Ps. lxxxvi. 3. . . Also the house of God ; the paradise of God ; the land of the living ; and eternal life ; eternal light ; eternal rest ; eternal glory ; eternal happiness. . .

2°. It is also called, and is, according to the special point of view, a harvest, a reward, a crown, an inheritance, the table and banquet of the Lord. *Every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour.* 1 Cor. iii. 8. . . And : *Then will he render to every man according to his works.* Matth. xvi. 27. He does not say according to his talents, his duties or functions, his resolutions . . but *according to his works.* . .

3°. It is the *temple of the glory* of God ; and as such it is the fulfilment and realization of the *temple of grace*, which is the Church on earth.

4°. It is the celestial paradise, surpassing beyond comparison the earthly paradise that once was. This latter God prepared for man innocent but not glorified. It contained indeed many natural delights of flower and plant and tree, with its animals all subject to man ; but for all that it contained too its tree of forbidden fruit under which lurked the serpent of sin. . .

5°. And when heaven's gate opens, how great the happiness of the soul that enters there! What joy of intellect, of memory, of will and of heart! There we shall realize what we now believe and hope for. We now believe in God the Father Almighty, there we shall see Him face to face, and Jesus Christ who died for us, and the Holy Ghost who gives us grace. . . . *We shall see, we shall love, we shall possess* (Aug.) ; for there *charity never passeth away*, but, as an immovable sun, ever stands in the meridian. . . .

6°. And as to its joys, what pen or tongue can describe them? Even the Apostle Paul did not attempt to do so, but could only say : *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him.* 1 Cor. ii. 9. . . . They are such as become the magnificence and greatness of God. *Only there our Lord is magnificent.* Isai. xxxiii. 21.

They are such that no works done, no tribulations borne, nay not even the tortures of the martyrs, could of themselves (*per se*) merit : *The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come.* Rom. viii. 18. . . . They are such that man while here below could not look upon them and longer live. . . .

7°. What is heaven as compared with earth—earth with its many miseries and its few sickly joys? . . . But what, oh ! what is it as compared with man's alternative goal, hell—hell, from which God has withdrawn His face, and where He is known only by His dread power ; hell, where senses are ever tormented and the worm of conscience is ever gnawing ; hell, from whose fiery concave the howling of torture and shrieking of despair ever ascend, only to be echoed back from the thrice three-fold barred gates? Yes, apart from what heaven is in itself, hell by contrast should alone make us seek it.

8°. And yet while the virtues and sufferings of this life bear no proportion to the glory to come, still, by God's dispensation, they have the power of meriting, and heaven will be given as a reward—its joys, its palms, and its crowns. In heaven we reap what we here sow. . . .

9°. *If, therefore, you seek riches, let them be those that are true.* S. Greg. In heaven are true riches, true glory, true happiness : *Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.* Matth. vi. 20. . .

10°. Earthly goods, even the best that the imagination can picture, are alloyed with bitterness ; they do not satisfy ; they beget tedium, and soon come to an end. . . But in heaven not so : there tedium is unknown ; there duration never lapses into decay ; it has no evening and night is banished ; while its delights, surpassing human comprehension, are enjoyed in the freshness of perpetual morning.

11°. In heaven everything is new : (1) new existence, without labour, without poverty, without the sting of tribulation ; (2) new habitation, where sojourners in this vale of tears find home—the home of God's presence ; (3) new society, into which neither ingratitude nor detraction enters ; but in which is perfect order, and perfect peace ; (4) new joys, of which those of earth can give no idea ; (5) new—that is renovated—soul, which, formerly deprived of primeval gifts, and wounded in its faculties, is now fully restored, and, in addition, is endowed with the light of the Beatific Vision ; (6) new body, resplendent with the four characteristics of glory¹ ; (7) new duration—eternity. . . *Behold I make all things new.* . . *And I saw a new heaven and a new earth.* . . *And I John saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God.* Apoc. xxi.

III. Who are the inhabitants of Heaven ?

1°. In point of numbers they are innumerable, as becometh the majesty of God : *I saw a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne, and in sight of the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.* Apoc. vii. 9

¹ For these see theology : *Quæ dotes corporum Beatorum ?*

2°. There is God, three in one, from whose presence, like light from the meridian sun, glory emanates, and makes heaven what it is. . .

3°. There is Christ our Lord in all the glory of His Divinity and Humanity ; and on His right hand His and our Mother Mary.

4°. There are Angels innumerable : *Thousands of thousands ministered to him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before him.* Dan. vii. 10.

5°. There are men, all the just from Abel to the last man that shall die in grace : Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs and Virgins ; representatives of every age, of every sex, of every state—ecclesiastical and lay, superiors and servants—of every generation and of every place. There they are, the flowers of the earth, the immaculate and holy. No place for the wicked : none for the drunkard, none for the unchaste, none for the irreligious, none for the blasphemer. *Lord, who shall dwell in thy tabernacle ? or who shall rest in thy holy hill ? He that walketh without blemish, and worketh justice.* Ps. xiv. 1, 2. . . *There shall not enter into it anything defiled.* Apoc. xxi. 27.

There they are : some who preserved their baptismal robe without stain, and some who washed it clean with tears and penance. *These are they who are come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb.* Apoc. vii. 14.

There they are : men who, like us, lived on earth, subject to the same infirmities, who used the same sacraments ; many whom we saw and knew ; some whom we called by the name of brother, sister, parent ; whom, perhaps, we too deeply grieved over when death called them. . .

But amongst the number shall not be found wordlings who went after the joys, and spectacles of this life, and wished to enjoy their heaven here. Much less will sinners be there found. . . But behold what a multitude of the poor, the meek, the merciful, and those who wept in penance and in sorrow !

6°. Oh ! how glorious is the Kingdom in which Christ reigns with His Saints ! *Then shall the just shine as the sun, in the Kingdom of their Father.* Matth. xiii. 43. Like to angels, like to Christ, like to God, whose image they bear. *Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God ; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when he shall appear we shall be like to him : because we shall see him as he is.* 1 John, iii. 2. . . The servant of God, now poor, modest, despised, shall then surpass King Solomon in all his glory. *Thy friends, O God, are made exceedingly honourable , their principality is exceedingly strengthened. . . What is man that thou art mindful of him ? . . Thou hast crowned him with glory and honour.* Ps. cxxxviii, 8. . . *To him that shall overcome, I will give to sit with me in my throne.* Apoc. iii. 21.

7°. And as to the qualities of a glorified body, they are four ; namely, *impassibility* (it can suffer no longer), *subtility* (like a spirit it can pass through matter, as Christ entered where the Disciples were, the door being shut), *agility* (it can pass at will from place to place instantaneously), *clarity* (it shall shine like the sun). These qualities were partly manifested in Christ's body on Mount Thabor, and partly at His Resurrection. So too the body of the Blessed Virgin. And we shall one day, after the resurrection, thus shine : *Yet so, if we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified with him.* Rom. viii. 17. . . The Lord Himself *will reform the body of our lowliness, made like to the body of his glory.* Phil. iii. 21.

8°. And as to the various grades of beatitude, *one is the glory of the sun, another the glory of the moon, and another the glory of the stars. For star differeth from star in glory.* 1 Cor. xv. 41. . .

[Here the preacher might discuss, whence the difference in glory ? . . Also, who shine brightest in heaven ? . . And, can any earthly beauty be compared with the least heavenly glory ? . . Likewise, which are the various palms ? which the different aureolae ? and the special insignia of glory that will characterize Martyrs, Virgins, and Doctors. . .]

IV. How can we get to Heaven ?

1°. By travelling the way of Christ, by following his footsteps, by entering by the narrow path. . . . As to the gate of heaven it is a figurative expression that may be construed in different ways ; but certain it is that the chief gate, no matter how looked at, is the temple : *Domus Dei et porta Coeli*.

2°. Not by soft living, as worldlings picture it ; but *through many tribulations*. Acts, xiv. 21. . . . Not by eating forbidden fruit, as the devil lyingly suggests ; but by eating the food of the Divine will, as Christ teaches. . . .

3°. Not by walking as those have done who are now damned ; but as those who have already gained heaven, and who from there speak to us and admonish us. . . .

4°. How can I gain Heaven ? . . . Whom should I consult on this point ? The world ? . . . My own passions ? . . . Ah ! no ; but—Christ. . . .

5°. I can get there by fulfilling three conditions :—by looking towards it ;—by willing it, not, however, in any half-hearted way ;—by meriting it. . . .

6°. I can get there by ladder, and wings, and by fiery chariot : by the ladder of the cross of Christ ; by the wings of prayer and battle ; and, Elias like, by the fiery chariot of charity. . . .

7°. Some gain heaven as an inheritance—baptised children who die before the use of reason ; some by meriting—by labours and tribulations ; some by violence—by force of arms and successful clash of battle ; some by purchasing it—with the spiritual coin of alms and charity ; some, if I may so speak, by purloining it—by the silent, hidden hand of humility ; and other some, because they hold the key that unerringly clicks the lock of heaven's gate—the key of the cross, penance, and patience.

8°. Can all reach heaven ? Can Catholics who are true to their faith ? . . . What of sinners, even those who are bound by sinful habit ? . . . And they who have spent their

life in vice? . . . Can I attain to heaven? . . . As a matter of fact, is my life such that I can succeed? . . .

9°. And as to the means, heaven is reached by a good life, and a holy death. . . . Does it suffice to die well, like the penitent thief, who on the very day of his death was with Christ in Paradise? . . . Why, in addition, is it necessary for me to live well? . . .

10°. And as to the price at which heaven is purchased, we can say: nothing is more precious than heaven; nothing more cheap; and yet nothing more rare—how explain this enigma? . . .

11°. Is the way to heaven straight and even? . . . What are the obstacles on the way; and what are the aids? . . . What renders the way difficult, and what easy? . . .

12°. What is the straightest, what the shortest, and what the easiest road to heaven? . . .

13°. The way to heaven is ever upward. . . . He who is unwilling to ascend must of necessity descend. . . .

14°. As there is a twofold hell (the hell of sin here, the hell of punishment hereafter), so there is a twofold heaven—the terrestrial paradise (the Sacred Heart) in this life, and the celestial paradise in the future. . . .

15°. Why then do so many only languidly seek so great a good? Why do not more look to heaven? What interferes with their view? The fog of pride . . . the mist of pleasure . . . the thick veil of avarice. . . .

16°. Regarding the way to heaven, we must distinguish different classes of men: some err the way, and some enter on it; of these latter, some walk languidly, and some with quick and firm step; some advance, and some fall; some have eyes for what is ahead, and some are always looking back; and, finally, some run that they may reach the goal and receive the prize. . . .

17°. Again, some are certainly on the road to heaven; and some most certainly are not there. . . . Where am I? . . . When shall I enter, if I have not already done so, on this road? . . .

18°. Entrance into heaven. . . . The soldier of Christ

about to die lies on his bed of sickness ; he experiences indeed human misery, but how great is his joy of soul ! *Come*, he can say, *come Lord Jesus . . . come Mary Mother of grace. . . Behold I come and my reward with me. . . Go forth, Christian soul, from this world. . . The glowing cohort of angels is ready to meet you. . . The meek and smiling face of Jesus will soon break on your view . . . soon you shall see your Redeemer face to face. . .* What joy, and what a change, when the soul shakes off its mortal coil, and, clothed with celestial beauty, is introduced into the mansion of the Blessed ! . .

19°. Let us at least do as much to gain heaven as worldlings do for earth and hell. . . Let us imitate the traveller in a foreign land who is bent on walking back to his home ; he flings aside what may impede him, he chooses the most direct way, and one not hidden beneath brambles, he does not delay to collect flowers, but with quick and determined step goes whither his eyes are bent—his native land.

SPECIAL HEADINGS.

The Saints are happy : I. through memory of the past ; II. through joy in the present ; III. through security for the future.

When the Lord mentioned the eight beatitudes He commemorated the threefold happiness of heaven : I. they shall be comforted ; II. they shall have their fill ; III. they shall see God.

I. All desire to be happy. Men may differ in many things ; but in this one desire all agree. . . But in what do they place their happiness ? . . II. On earth there cannot be true happiness since it is only a sojourn. . . III. But true happiness is in Heaven.

I. For Heaven I was born—and as a symbol I carry my head erect. . . II. Heaven I ought to reach ; because there is eternal happiness, and out of heaven eternal ruin. . . III. Heaven I can reach, and that easily.

HEAVEN.

SECOND DISCOURSE.

PARTICULAR VIEW.

Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven.—Matth. v. 12.

MEDITATION on heaven makes for loving and serving God. It likewise leads to a contempt of earth; hence the saying of S. Ignatius: *When I look to heaven, how vile earth becomes!* And if labours are to be borne, the words of S. Gregory brace us up: *If the labour terrifies, the reward invites.* And if tribulations are to be endured, the voice of Christ Himself infuses strength, constancy and joy: *Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven.*

We shall consider three things in regard to this most pleasing truth:

I. What is Paradise?

II. Who have entered there?

III. How can I enter?

I. What is Paradise?

1°. It is difficult to say: not less difficult than to say what God is, as the philosopher Simonides of old pointed out to Hieron of Syracuse. . . Hence S. Paul said: *Eye hath not seen.* . . What, if a man born blind should undertake to speak of the splendour of the sun? or an infant born in poverty, of the magnificence of a king's palace? . . The

most I can do is to set before you what Sacred Scripture and the Fathers say. And if I ask them what heaven is, they reply that:—

2°. Heaven is the opposite of hell. . . It is called the house of God. . . The temple of His glory. . . The Kingdom of God. . . The throne of God. . . It can be described as the *Palace of God, where God has placed His throne, and where He has prepared most pure joys for them that love Him.*

3°. Heaven is the mansion of God. . . Magnificent is the earth, which God has prepared as a habitation for men; but it is only God's foot-stool. Magnificent are the temples and altars of the Lord; but these are only a gate to heaven. . . Great are the palaces of the kings of this world; but they are only the home of mortals, not of God. . . Gorgeous is the description given by S. John in the Apocalypse (xxi.); but for all that it is only a faint image of heaven; for it is written elsewhere: *Eye hath not seen.* . . . Some day I shall see, and then I shall know: *That where I am you also may be.* John, xiv. 3. . . *I rejoiced in the things that were said to me: we shall go into the house of the Lord.* Ps. cxxi. 1.

4°. Heaven is the throne of God, around which stand the Angels and Saints. The army and choirs of angels, who are the princes of heaven, the soldiers and ministers of God, remain *standing before the throne.* Apoc. vii. 9. . . So too the elect of every race, of every tribe and tongue, the saints and friends of God, *stand before the throne and in sight of the Lamb.* See Isai. vi. ; Dan. vii. 9 ; Apoc. iv. 2.

5°. In Heaven are joys most pure, whatever human nature can desire, be it joy of sense, of mind, or of heart. . . What is it you wish to see? Is it not the beautiful. Never yet have you seen it, for earth contains it not; what on earth appears beautiful is but the flimsy covering of corruption. But in heaven is real beauty: the splendour of the Angels, of the Saints, of the Blessed Virgin, of the Humanity of Christ, of the face of God Himself. . . What will it be to hear the music of heaven's choir! . . . What, to inhale the odour of the incense that ascends before the throne of

God ! . . What, to taste the bread of Angels, having in it all sweetness—that invisible food and drink of which Raphael spoke to Tobias (xii. 19), that manna sweeter than all honey ! . . *I dispose to you, as my Father hath disposed to me, a Kingdom ; that you may eat and drink at my table, in my Kingdom.* Luke, xxii. 29, 30.

Do you desire glory ? There will be true glory—the glory of sitting on a throne, crowned with beauty. *When he shall appear, we shall be like to him. . . Then shall the just shine as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father, and as the brightness of the firmament.* Matth. xiii. 43 . Dan. xii. 3.

Do you desire joy of heart ? There it shall be, the pure joy of divine love, than which there is nothing sweeter. *They shall be inebriated with the plenty of thy house.* Ps. xxxv. 9. . . S. Paul tasted, in this life, a drop from that celestial flood of joy and he exclaimed : *I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation.* 2 Cor. vii. 4.

6°. And it shall be without any admixture of bitterness : (1) all tears shall be dried ; (2) in this life sweetness without bitterness is unknown ; (3) in this life all joy generates satiety and distaste ; (4) in this life all joy comes to an end. But none of this in Paradise. . .

II. Who have entered there ?

1°. Angels and men. . . The Angels who in the hour of trial remained faithful and said : *Who is like to God ?* . . . Human beings who, like me, were placed on this earth, but who took care not to let temporal things interfere with those that were eternal. They passed through earth, and reached heaven ; some through the way of innocence, and others through that of penance. . . Of both classes we have many examples.

2°. Like doves that dwell in holes in the rock, not staining their feet with the mud or dust of earth, the following—to give a few examples—trod the way of innocence : Abel, Noe, Loth and Tobias, John the Baptist and Stephen ; Agatha

and Lucy, who died rather than serve idols ; Bibiana who preferred death to corruption ; the anchorites . . and the holy youths Aloysius and Stanislaus. . .

3°. And in the way of penance we at once recall such examples as Adam, David, Peter, the repentant thief, as also many others, even great sinners, who washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. . .

4°. There all, from every tribe and tongue, are signed ; they are signed with the sign of the cross of Christ, which they bore. . . The insignia of the world and the devil are not there—pride, luxury and riches. . . If any who are there did possess the latter, they were at least poor in spirit, and put them aside for the insignia of Christ. . .

5°. There all are crowned, and in their hands bear palms, each one according to the merit of his works, as star differs from star in splendour. . . All now rejoice in penance done, and with Christ reign without end.

III. How can I enter there ?

1°. By meditating on heaven. Thus will earth and all its blandishments grow vile in my eyes. Thus will all labour be made sweet in presence of such a reward. Thus will all tribulation grow light when measured by such weight of glory. . .

2°. By applying the means that the Saints used.

3°. By keeping the commandments : *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.* Matth. xxiv. 13.

Thus can be answered in some way that question which naturally arises in the mind of each one : How can I attain to this happiness ?

Conclusion. Therefore *sursum corda, sursum oculos*—let us lift up our hearts and raise our eyes. Let us look to heaven, our happy home, casting under foot the temporal, and striving after the eternal, regarding transitory things with the left eye, and the things of heaven with the right, fixing our heart and riveting our eyes where true joys reign.

Let us behold our abiding city, the new Jerusalem, in which as citizens our names are already inscribed—the celestial city, golden, and resplendent with the glory of God, the city which contains the tree of life, and where perpetual light shines. . . . *Behold the tabernacle of God with men, and he will dwell with them. And they shall be his people ; and God himself with them shall be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes : and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more. . . .* Apoc. xxi. 3, 4.

Let us look up and rejoice . . . and hasten to enter into *that rest* (Hebr. iv. 11) where joys await us that no man shall take from us. . . . There let us store up for ourselves treasures . . . there let us seek the unfading crown of glory.

Every one that striveth for the mastery, refraineth himself from all things : and they indeed that they may receive a corruptible crown ; but we an incorruptible one. 1 Cor. ix. 25.

The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us. Rom. viii. 18. . . . *For that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.* 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.

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